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MUSES & THE HEALING  
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STORIES OF  
LOVE ACROSS  
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REAL TALK  
ON THE  
BARRIERS  
THAT  
KEEP US  
APART  
& WHY

## DENIM FOR DAYS!

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150 BEAUTY, STYLE, HAIR  
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Liya Kebede



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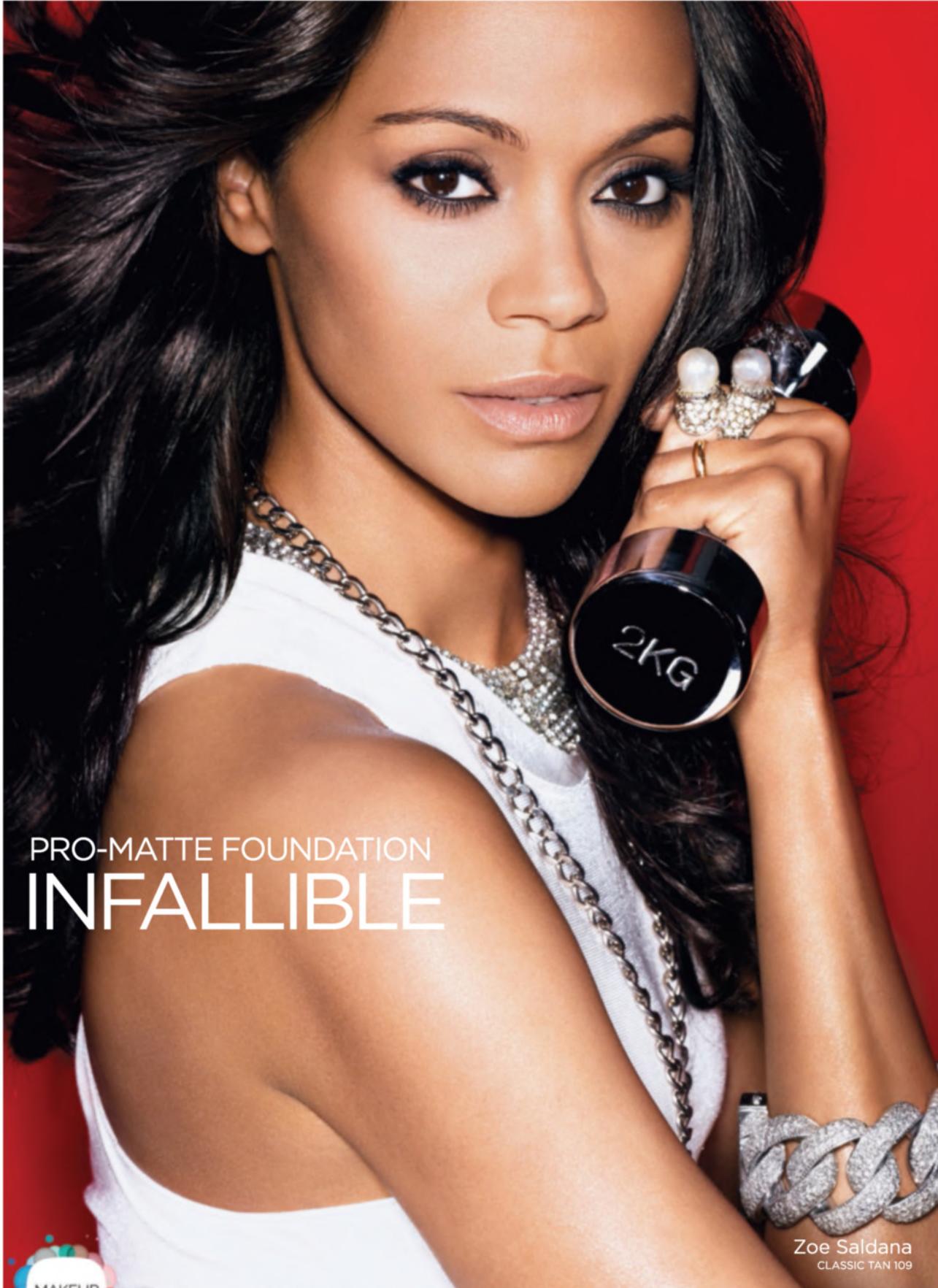
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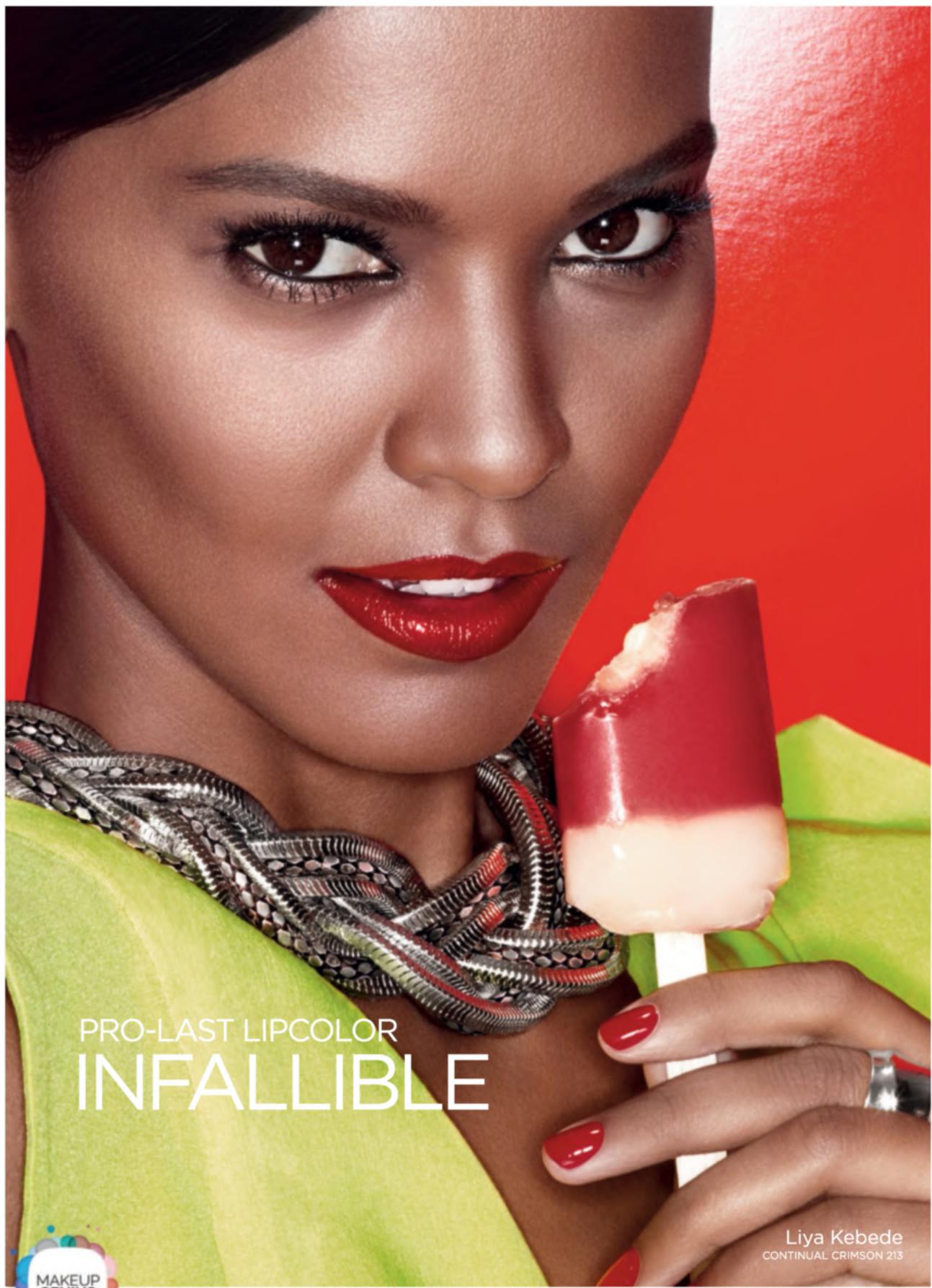
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# AUGUST

2015

VOLUME 46 | NUMBER 4

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By Cori Murray

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Six women from different parts of the globe tell what it's like to be Black in their neck of the woods By Britni Danielle

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LGBT activists in Africa are engaged in a life-or-death struggle for their rights By Linda Villarosa

IT FEELS VERY SACRED TO ME,

LIKE THERE'S LOTS OF ANCESTRY IN IT. THERE'S A SINGLE QUARTZ CRYSTAL, THERE'S A MAYAN CALENDAR, AN ETHIOPIAN CROSS AND A COMPASS. THEY'RE ALL FOR DIRECTION."

—Erykah Badu on the significance of her thigh-length chain necklace, which she has been collecting for ten years.

#### ON THE COVER

Photography by Warwick Saint.

Stylist, Joiee Thorpe. Hairstylist, Derick Monroe. Makeup artist, Frank Guyton for Ken Barboza. Erykah Badu is wearing *alice + olivia* by Stacey Bendet culottes, *Alexis Bittar* cuff and her own hat. Feathers, stylist's own.

ON THIS PAGE Miss Badu wears an *alice + olivia* by Stacey Bendet blouse, a *Camilla* skirt, *Gemma Redux* cuff, *Jardin Babouche* shoes and her own necklace and ring. For clothing details, see Where to Buy.

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Nail the look with  
Shock Wave and Pink Tank

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Game of Chromes

Pink Tank

# GOING GLOBAL

Last June we invited you to #seesomeworld by stretching beyond your comfort zone and exploring new destinations. Then we decided to take our own advice!

Our ESSENCE cover team recently journeyed to East Africa. As our creative director, Erika Perry, says, "It was the trip of a lifetime."

As our world widens, we hope to feature more international coverage with greater frequency. For now, as the barriers that all too often separate us give way to a more inclusive and accurate worldview, can we build bridges across all cultures?

Write and share your thoughts with me.

*Vanessa K. De Luca*

**VANESSA K. DE LUCA**

Editor-in-Chief

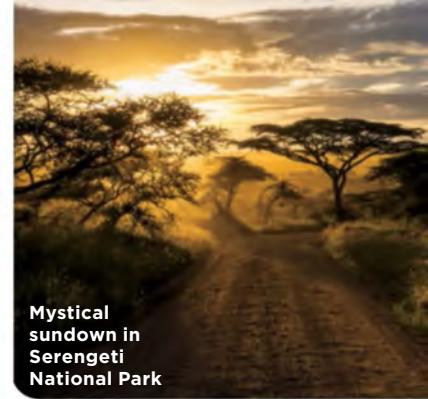
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Food shopping in Zanzibar's Darajani's fish market.



Mystical sundown in Serengeti National Park



**Zanzibar**  
Serena Hotel's pathway to the Indian Ocean



A safe landing, thanks to Serengeti Balloon Safari's Captain Abeid Soka



A Maasai giraffe strolling in the Serengeti's grassy plains.



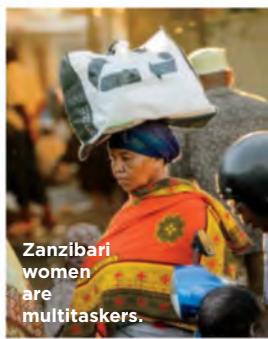
A puddle jumper—it's the only way to fly.



Bright hijabs add pops of color in the streets.



The House of Wonders is Stone Town's most iconic landmark.



Zanzibari women are multitaskers.



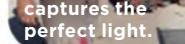
Dressed in kargas, women in Arusha, Tanzania, sell fresh fruits at the market.



Stone Town, sunset and swimming



Producer Jill Bishop mentoring at the International School of Moshi



Photographer Warwick Saint captures the perfect light.



A leopard is one of Serengeti's big five animals.



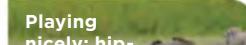
Andrea Jackson, Paul Joynson-Hicks and Cori Murray



A dhow sailing on the Indian Ocean.



**Tanzania**  
National Parks' Ibraim A. Mussa (left), Derick Monroe and Pamela Edwards Christiani



Playing nicely: hip-popotamus and zebras



Last shot with cover girl Erykah Badu



Elephants graze before nightfall.



Pink flamingos at Lake Manyara in Tanzania



Joeie Thorpe and Frank Guyton

## A Special Thank-You (Asante sana)

Jill Bishop and Paul Joynson-Hicks; (in Tanzania) Beatrice Kessy, Arusha Coffee Lodge, Four Seasons Safari Lodge, Serengeti Serena Safari Lodge; Zanzibar Serena Hotel and The Residence Zanzibar; (in Kenya), Lillian Otieno, Nana Gecaga, DusitD2, Giraffe Manor, and all the park rangers who watched over us.



**TABLET EXTRAS** See more fabulous pics of our time in Africa.

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and  
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREG VORE  
FASHION EDITOR: JOIEE THORPE

Maki Oh top. One x  
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"Whiskey Cadillac" skirt.  
Cocoa Jewelry bracelet.  
Ruthie Davis pumps.

# STYLÉ

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hudsonjeans.com.



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Earl Jean patchwork  
jeans, \$54,  
steinmart.com.

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MiH "Linda"  
jeans, \$265,  
us.mih-jeans.com.

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blouse, Basic  
Terrain "Eden"  
pants, Sigerson  
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Ring, stylist's own.

For details, see  
Where to Buy. ▷





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### AG Jeans

Jetsetter leggings, \$176, [agjeans.com](http://agjeans.com).



### Denimocracy

Anarchy Knit Skinny in City Lights, \$207, [denimocracyusa.com](http://denimocracyusa.com).



### Gap

1969 legging jeans, \$70, [gap.com](http://gap.com).

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**Lisette L Montréal** jeans, \$120, [lisettel.com](http://lisettel.com).

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311 shaping skinny, \$65, [belk.com](http://belk.com).

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**It Girl**

# ZIM UGOCHUKWU

THE CREATOR OF TRAVEL NOIRE INSPIRES US TO GET OUT AND SEE THE WORLD!

BY PAMELA EDWARDS CHRISTIANI

**ESSENCE: How did Travel Noire come to be?**

**ZIM UGOCHUKWU:** It was born out of frequent encounters I had with people of color who were skeptical about going abroad. While living in India, I was hopping on flights to different countries for less than \$50, and I wanted to share my experiences with individuals interested in working travel into their lives. Instead of focusing on me, I empower others to share their stories. Travel Noire is a digital publishing brand that creates compelling resources to help people discover new destinations.

**ESSENCE: How can we step out of our travel comfort zones?**

**Z.U.:** If you wait for other people, you'll do yourself a huge disservice. Trekking solo? Start local. Take yourself on a date to a dinner or a movie. Then move on up to a staycation. Book a room at a hotel, grab your favorite novel and spend the weekend enjoying your own company. Next, take a trip overseas, but to a country where English is spoken. After you've conquered these three jaunts, you'll be able to conquer the world! □



► **TALULA**  
Parka, \$120,  
aritzia.com.



► **TUMI**  
"Calais"  
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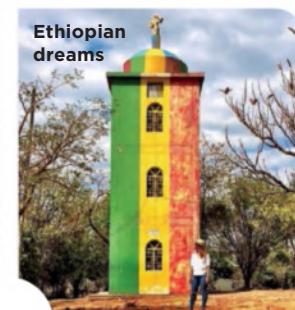
► **DOLCE & GABBANA**  
Light Blue  
Eau de  
Toilette,  
\$72, 50 ml,  
Sephora.

► **STEAL LIKE AN ARTIST** by Austin Kleon (Workman), \$6.12, amazon.com.

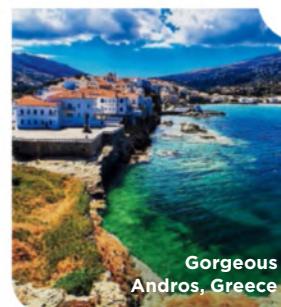
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# Passport to Pretty

FROM KOREA TO KENYA, GLAM SPANS THE GLOBE. TURN THE PAGE AND STEAL A LITTLE INSPIRATION FROM THESE BEAUTY-CENTRIC LOCALES

BY NYKIA SPRADLEY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY WARWICK SAINT

## AFRICAN QUEEN

Former Miss Tanzania, Millen Magese, strolls across the grounds of The Residence resort in Zanzibar. Be like the international model and keep your hot-weather beauty easy-breezy with oil-free moisturizer that includes an SPF. Wear minimal foundation and use a gentle body exfoliator for silky smooth skin.

# BEAUTY

“As soon as the workday was done, it was time for gorgeousness.”  
— GINA TORRES

Rebeca Cisneros Torres (Mother of Gina Torres), circa 1950

# CUBA

From old-school barbershops set against the colorful landscape to red lipstick that appears to be standard wear among the women, the tradition of beauty runs deep in Cuba. Actress Gina Torres, whose parents are both from the Caribbean island, gives her take on beauty habits there: “One of my first trips to Cuba was when I was a teenager. And one of my favorite memories was of women going about their workday in curlers or ‘doobies.’ The ladies were tastefully dressed, makeup well done and wearing earrings—but with a head full of enormous curlers, using the hot sun to dry their wet set. It was a look. And then as soon as the workday was done, there was a bath and the hair would come down and it was time for gorgeousness.” Torres believes that the real beauty of Cuban women is an attitude.

They've got “swagger...it must be the heat and humidity. It makes them walk differently,” she says. “I don't know of any culture where beauty—the pursuit of it and the desire to be surrounded by it—isn't a part of its collective consciousness. Cuban women are not immune to this.” ▷



1. CIRCA Color Absolute Velvet Luxe Lipstick in 09 Rita (\$10, Walgreens)

2. DEMETER FRAGRANCE LIBRARY Cuba Cologne Spray (\$20, 1 oz, demeter fragrance.com)

3. LUMIRA Cuban Tobacco Candle (\$55, gallantoro.com)

4. FOREVER 21 Faux Rose Headband (\$5, forever21.com)

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# AMALFI COAST

**Southern Italy is all about color, opulence and the enjoyment of life.**

— MARINA SERSALE

Jay and Bey's idea of an "Upgrade" back in 2006 was island-hopping off the Amalfi Coast. Almost a decade later, Italy's famous shores still exude extravagance. But yachts and expensive swimwear aside, the mix of minimalism and splendor in the Mediterranean is deep-rooted in its sense of style. Southern Italy, where the Amalfi Coast is situated, "is all about color, opulence, beauty and joie de vivre, or enjoyment of life," explains Marina Sersale, cofounder of the Italian fragrance company Eau d'Italie. The clothes and scenery may be vibrant, but beauty choices are quite understated. Women wear little to no makeup. And lemons, the region's staple, can be found in luxe fragrances. Indeed, "the traditional beauty habits of Southern Italy are of a very natural kind," says Sersale. ▶



**1. GIORGIO ARMANI** Fluid Sheer in #11 (\$62, armanibeauty.com)

**2. SPARITUAL** Lacquer in Infuse (\$12, sparitual.com)

**3. GUCCI** Nail Bold High-Gloss Lacquer in Abyss (\$29, saks.com)

**4. DOLCE & GABBANA** Nail Lacquer in Innocence (\$26, saks.com)

**5. EAU D'ITALIE** Signature Scent (\$140, lafco.com)

**6. PIXI BY PETRA** Mesmerizing Mineral Palette in Aquamarine Dream (\$12, target.com)

**7. ACQUA DI PARMA** Fico di Amalfi Body Lotion (\$74, sephora.com)

**8. JIMMY CHOO** "Nita" Sunglasses (\$695, Jimmy Choo boutiques)



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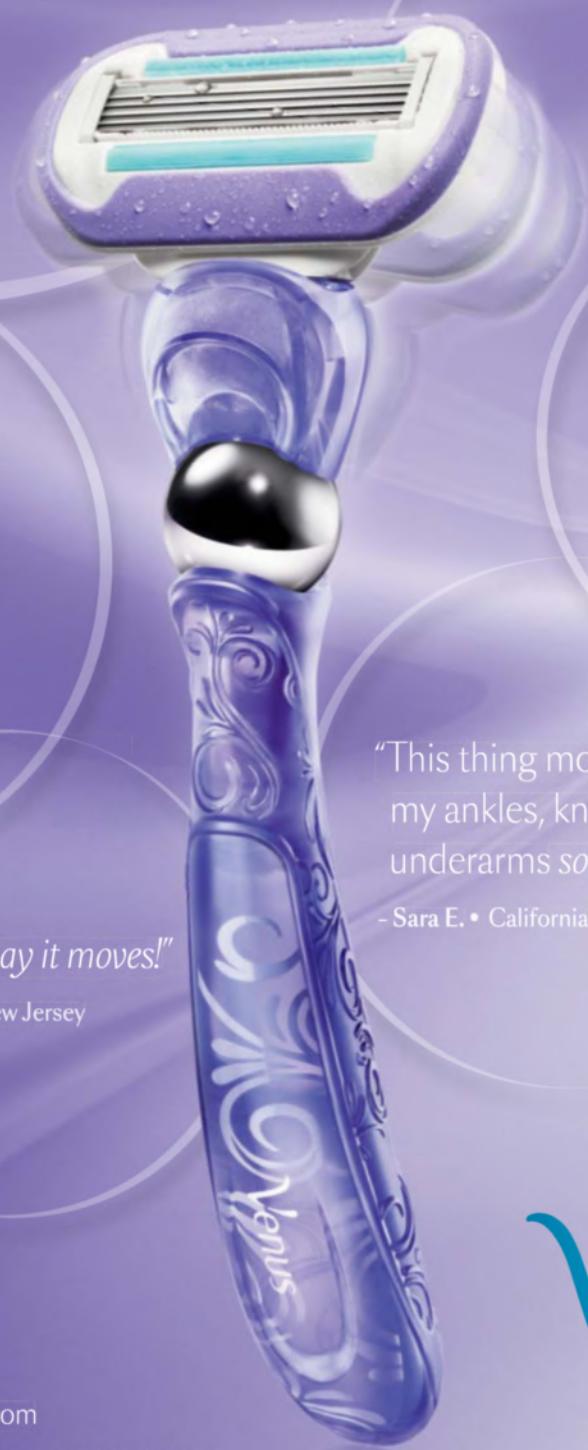
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- Amanda J. • New Jersey

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- Sara E. • California

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You can bathe in Moroccan tea, use it to steam the face and use it as a hair rinse."

—NDOEMA, THE GLOBAL GIRL

# MOROCCO

Rich in both culture and tradition, this North African nation is one of the originators of some of our fave beauty treats, like kohl eyeliner and luxurious bath experiences. Travel maven and blogger Ndoema, aka The Global Girl, has coasted through much of the world and lived in 12 countries, learning six languages along the way. She takes us into her recent journey through a Moroccan hammam: "It's kind of the Moroccan form of a sauna, but it is very ritualized in a wonderful way." The hammam isn't just about sweating things out. "The women exfoliate a lot, and it's very much a bonding experience among them," Ndoema adds. The Moroccan beauty culture is mostly about detoxing, hence the purifying ritual of using black soap (*beldi*) made from pine tar with a kessa, or loofah glove, to exfoliate. Moroccans also use *rhassoul*, or mineral clay, to keep the skin blemish-free, and they moisturize the skin and hair with argan oil. Ndoema also explains that women there use Moroccan tea for internal detoxification as well as for external application. "It's basically kind of a Moroccan beauty weapon," she says. "The women bathe in the tea, use it to steam the face and use it as a hair rinse."



**1. SONIA KASHUK**  
Dramatically Intensifying Kajal (\$9, target.com)

**2. CINQ MÔNDÉS**  
Beldi Black Soap, (\$60, cinqmondes spacarmel.com)

**3. KESH BEAUTY**  
Argan Oil With Rose Essence (\$40, keshbeauty.com)

**4. KAHINA GIVING BEAUTY** Essaouira Body Serum (\$32, kahina-givingbeauty.com)

**5. MAKE UP FOR EVER**  
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# 31 DAYS OF BLACK BEAUTY

WE TROTTED ACROSS THE U.S. & THE GLOBE, FROM MEXICO TO SOUTH AFRICA, TO FIND GOODIES THAT SPEAK OUR LANGUAGE

BY ANDREA JORDAN

## 9



An Australian company's pure silk mask and pillowcase help to prevent wrinkling and hair breakage while you sleep.



## 10

The fusion of papaya, honey and cocoa butter makes an all over balm safe for both mommy and baby!



## 13



Soothe dry scalp and dandruff with a blend of almond oil, lavender and chamomile.

## 12



A Mexican brand seeks to make flat ironing healthy, with steam and agave serum.

## 1

A tried-and-true German fave now has even more hydrating rose oil.



## 2



Those with super dry skin will appreciate this oil, which delivers and locks in moisture.

## 2

Inspired by Ilha do Mel, Brazil, the luxurious Parisian fragrance has notes of mandarin, jasmine, vanilla and vetiver.



## 3



It's a lightly scented styling paste that keeps hair in place without stickiness.

## 5

The coveted French emollient is a makeup artist's treasure.



## 8



Create an at-home hammam bath with this amber and musk Lebanese soap on a rope.



## 12



This British skin-care guru has created an antiaging foundation with SPF and colors for us!

## 11



A multitasker from the U.K. serves as a softener, mask, moisturizer or cleanser.

## 15



Worn alone or layered, these Boho chic glitters, named after U.K. landmarks, are just fab. ▷

9 AND 12: GREG VOLK. ALL OTHERS COURTESY OF BRANDS. GERMANY, AUSTRALIA AND MEXICO FLAGS: MASTY/GETTY IMAGES. LEBANON FLAG: IMAGE SOURCE/GETTY IMAGES.

**1. Dr. Hauschka Rose Day Cream** (\$43, drhauschka.com). **2. Memo Paris** Ilha do Mel Eau du Parfum (\$250, Bergdorf Goodman). **3. Leonor Greyl** Baume Bois de Rose (\$49, leonorgreyl-usa.com). **4. Skyn Iceland** Arctic Face Oil (\$35, skyniceland.com). **5. Embryolisse** Lait-Crème Concentré Gold (\$28, sephora.com). **6. Illia** Lipstick Crayons (\$24 each, illiabeauty.com). **7. Korres** Yoghurt Nourishing Fluid Face Sunscreen SPF 30 (\$35, korresusa.com). **8. Senteurs d'Orient** Hammam Soap (\$38, senteursdorient.com). **9. Slip** Silk Sleep Mask and Pillowcase (\$40 and \$80, slipsilkpillowcase.com). **10. Suvana Beauty** Paw Paw & Honey Balm (\$4, shop.goop.com). **11. Neal's Yard Remedies** Wild Rose Beauty Balm (\$70, us.nyrorganic.com). **12. Eve Lom** Radiant Glow Cream Foundation + SPF 30 (\$55, barneys.com). **13. Shiffa** Relaxing Hair Oil (\$87, shiffa.com). **14. Agave** Healing Vapor Iron (\$149, Sephora). **15. Nails Inc.** Luxe Boho Collection (\$15 each, nailsinc.com).

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Emily is wearing New Eye Studio® Brow Define + Fill Duo in Soft Brown. ©2015 Maybelline LLC.

## BEAUTY : SPECIAL

# 16



Active Dead Sea minerals lift, tighten and revitalize skin while you snooze.

# 20

We love this argan-infused Brazilian conditioner for our own hair or extensions.



# 21



Some swear by this South African product, which helps improve the appearance of scars and stretch marks.



# 17

This Indonesian-inspired, nutrient-filled skin treatment hydrates, firms and brightens.



# 18

Take bold liner to a new level with this twofer pencil—it gives you double the options!



# 19



Olive oil-soaked cotton swabs remove dirt and moisturize at the same time.

# 22



Support the youth of Burundi while carrying your makeup in style.



# 23



These pigment-rich shadows can be worn wet or dry, and the long-lasting formulation stays in place for hours.

# 24



It's worth the investment when art meets ambience in a candle.

# 25



Safeguard hair, face and body from harsh summer rays with this Spanish dry oil.



# 26



This 90 percent natural hair spray, which offers UV protection without crunch, is a keeper!

# 27



These Portuguese soaps are milled seven times to ensure no breaking or cracking, and they smell like heaven!



# 30



Stimulate circulation with this dried seaweed from the coast of Sweden.



# 28



Honey extract acts as a primer for makeup while leaving a healthy glow.

# 29



This Swiss booster serum has encapsulated peptides that aim for collagen-supporting skin cells.

19 AND 30: GREG VORE; ALL OTHERS COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS. ISRAEL FLAG: IMAGE SOURCE/GETTY IMAGES. SWEDEN FLAG: METAY/GETTY IMAGES. BURUNDI AND SPAIN FLAGS: ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA/ UIG/GETTY IMAGES. PORTUGAL FLAG: JIM BALLARD/GETTY IMAGES.

**16.** Ahava Beauty Before Age Uplift Night Cream (\$82, ahavas.com). **17.** Juara Radiance Vitality Oil (\$65, dermstore.com). **18.** Shu Uemura Dual Eye Pencil (\$24, shuemura-usa.com). **19.** DHC Olive Virgin Oil Swabs (\$6 for pack of 50, dhccare.com). **20.** Novex Argan Oil Leave-In Conditioner (\$10, novexhaircare.com). **21.** Bio-Oil (\$20, 4.2 oz, Walgreens). **22.** All Across Africa Makeup Bag (\$19, allacrossafrica.org). **23.** By Terry Eye Designer Palette in Color Design (\$96, b-glowing.com). **24.** Fornasetti Sole Di Capri Candle (\$175, barneys.com). **25.** Natura Bissé C+C Dry Oil Sun Protection SPF 30 (\$63, Bergdorf Goodman). **26.** Rahua Defining Hair Spray (\$37, rahua.com). **27.** Claus Porto Brise Marine/Cerina Soap (\$20, lafco.com). **28.** Touch In Sol Feel like Honey Moon Skin Base (\$24, sephora.com). **29.** La Prairie Anti-Aging Rapid Response Booster (\$290, laprairie.com). **30.** L:A Bruket Kurbad Seaweed (\$50, beautyhabit.com). **31.** Agonist Isis Sculpture (\$1,800 for sculpture and scent, everyfineperfumery.com).

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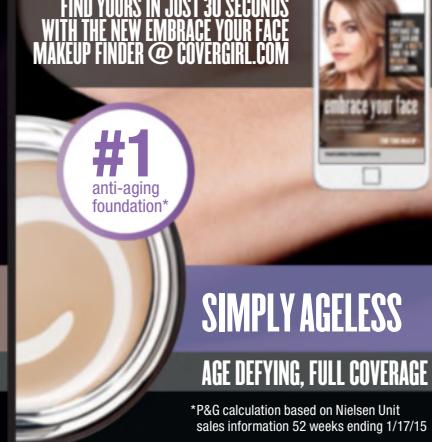
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## 7. Shine No More

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## 8. Kiddy Cool Down

Spritz youngsters with a little relief from the hot summer sun.

## 9. Swabs 2.0

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## 10. Bright Lips

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⑧

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①



③



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— Dipti Mehta, PhD

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# GET ON UP!

AFRICA IS FULL OF  
BEAUTIFUL WOMEN  
AND GORGEOUS  
BRAIDS. THESE UPDOS  
CAUGHT OUR EYE  
BY PAMELA EDWARDS CHRISTIANI  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREG VORE

## SILVER LININGS

She may look like a kid, but 27-year-old Vanessa Mdee rocks her gray locks with confidence. "Hair is the most important accessory," the MTV-Africa-nominated singer gushes. "Braids are my favorite because I can feel my scalp." Her cousin talked her into the granny hue, which is nothing short of fabulous on Vanessa. Stylist Derick Monroe crafted a cool frontal swoop using the end of her high ponytail, along with a few bobby pins.

# HAIR



### LONG AND STRONG

Musician and budding comedian Koryan "Koko" Wright (Erykah Badu's lil sis) traveled with us to Kenya and, fortunately for us, allowed us to photograph these stunning braids for this story. We learned that she braids her own hair and taught herself how by watching her childhood stylist, Isis, work magic. Koko's super-long strands are the result of a secret lengthening technique, one of Isis's skillful methods. "These braids are part of my persona now," she adds. "I love my hair but I'm a germaphobe, so I dip the ends into a little bit of bleach and water [within a huge gumbo pot] two to three times a week," she reveals. Koko usually wears her braids loose and free-flowing, but Monroe talked her into trying these Pocahontas plaits with a little pompadour. "I like this look," says Koko.

### DRUMMER'S DELIGHT

Like the other everyday beauties in this story, Diana Mbuba prefers braided looks that don't take all day in the salon.

The recent college grad and avid drummer is also Kenya's Miss Tourism Tharaka-Nithi County. Diana switches up her braided styles every two weeks and loves to experiment with color. Monroe added a braided crown to Diana's swirling cornrows for extra flair. ▶



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## HAIR : BRAIDS



### PURPLE REIGNS

Doreen Amateshe's work as a relations officer at the DusitD2 hotel in Nairobi calls for a neat look. "Because of work, I keep the braids for two to three weeks," she says. But she isn't conservative at heart. "When I was a student on campus, I'd do crazy colors, long braids." With that in mind, Monroe delivered a nice compromise, keeping Doreen's neat top and adding a chic purple ombre ponytail. ▷



### COMMON THREADS

Belinda Joanna Mukamirwa is studying at Vera Beauty & Fashion College in Nairobi. Her twists include woolen threads that are popular in Maasai culture. "It's easy to maintain, easy to wash. I can blow-dry the twists or let them air-dry in the sun," adds Belinda. Monroe created a waterfall effect to Belinda's look with structured twists on one side and a pretty cascade of loose twists on the other.



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## CARAMEL SWIRLS

We've included another Kenyan Miss Tourism delegate: Evelyn Arasa, a recent grad and future environmentalist. Janet Wayua (far right) braided Evelyn's gorgeous cornrows in about an hour and a half. She sees her every two weeks. "I have complete faith in her. She does the teachers' hair, so if the teachers trust her she must be good." Monroe took the ends of Evelyn's braids and created a pretty pattern at the crown.



**TABLET EXTRAS** Read more about Vanessa Mdee, who's leading the African music scene.



## HAUTE HAWK

Janet Wayua is also a student at Vera Beauty & Fashion College. She's a favorite braider among her peers (she braided Evelyn's hair) as well as her teachers. She has little time to fuss with her own hair, so she sticks to styles that can be completed in two hours or less, like this faux hawk. Monroe simply added a little sheen spray and kept it moving.



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—ANDREA JORDAN,  
BEAUTY ASSISTANT

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(\$44, [kerastase-usa.com](http://kerastase-usa.com))

**“***The bubble shaped wand gives me effortless waves that really lasts.***”**

—PAMELA EDWARDS CHRISTIANI, BEAUTY & STYLE DIRECTOR

VERGE Bubble Wand in Pink (\$120, [onestyling.com](http://onestyling.com))



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**MR. SMITH** Balancing Shampoo and Conditioner (\$30 each, [mr-smith.com.au](http://mr-smith.com.au))



The gentle and deliciously scented organic spray melts away kiddie tangles!  
**DANIEL GALVIN JR.** Dubble Trubble Watermelon Detangling Spray (\$5, Target)



Infused with kelp, sea buckthorn oil and organic shea butter, it keeps hair shiny and vibrant after sun exposure.  
**SHEAMOISTURE** Zanzibar Marine Complex Heat Shield Cream (\$11, Target)



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**B3 BRAZILIAN BOND BUILDER** (price varies by salon, [brazilianbondbuilder.com](http://brazilianbondbuilder.com) for info)



A treasured pre-shampoo treatment now has a floral, citrusy aroma—amazing!  
**PHILIP KINGSLEY** Geranium & Neroli Elasticizer (\$52, [philipkingsley.com](http://philipkingsley.com))



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**EGO** Professional Smart Touch-screen Hair Dryer (\$198, [qvc.com](http://qvc.com))

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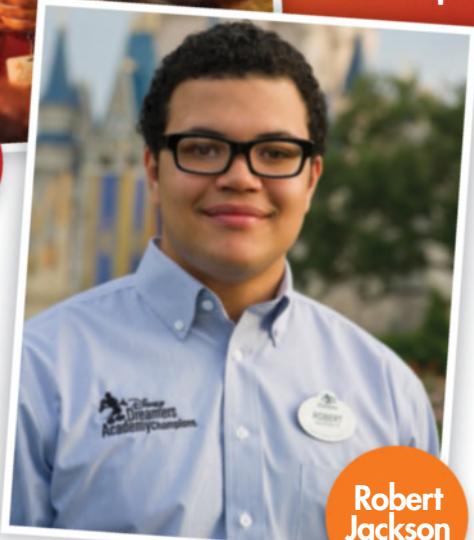
\*strength against damage; Pantene shampoo + conditioner system  
vs. the shampoo alone. ©2015 P&G

# JOURNEY TO A DREAM

Unlocking young people's potential, the Disney Dreamers Academy enables them to re-imagine their futures with the help of peer mentors and inspirational leaders like Steve Harvey.



Jonathan Johnson



Robert Jackson

## MAKE PLANS, DREAM BIG

Both young men attended Disney Dreamers Academy and are putting what they learned into action. "They gave us a new way to not only view life, but treat life," says Jonathan. "If you act and think like a successful person, half of the job is done and all that follows is the work." As for Robert, he took Mr. Harvey's advice and wrote out 500+ lifetime goals and has successfully accomplished 127 of them all before turning 21.



High schoolers apply now at [DisneyDreamersAcademy.com](http://DisneyDreamersAcademy.com)

© Disney

## MEET A COUPLE OF DREAMERS

Actor, dancer and musician, **Jonathan Johnson** is an Wellness Edu-tainer for a company he started with his mom, Healthy Family Adventure. But before he begins his freshman year at The American Musical & Dramatic Academy in the fall, he gets advice from mentor **Robert Jackson**, a senior at New York University, who has trained in acting in Florence, London and Amsterdam. Plus, he launched the enrichment Paideia Program in New York City.



## CREATE YOUR FUTURE

Jonathan's guiding dream is to use his talents in entertainment to bring positivity and change to humanity—goals that Robert knows well. "When pursuing the arts, always create and never stop," advises Robert. "You become the creative limitation that you place on yourself if you stop creating."

## BE LIMITLESS

His biggest piece of advice for Jonathan is to be your best self "Whether it be mentor, brother, son, husband or father," Robert says, "my dream is to be the best me that I can be." He explains that while the transition from high school to college will be difficult, self-care and recognition will help overcome the obstacles that try to get in your way. Robert ends with, "Believing in my dreams has allowed me to achieve them and if I continue with that mindset, only I can get in my way."





# dream

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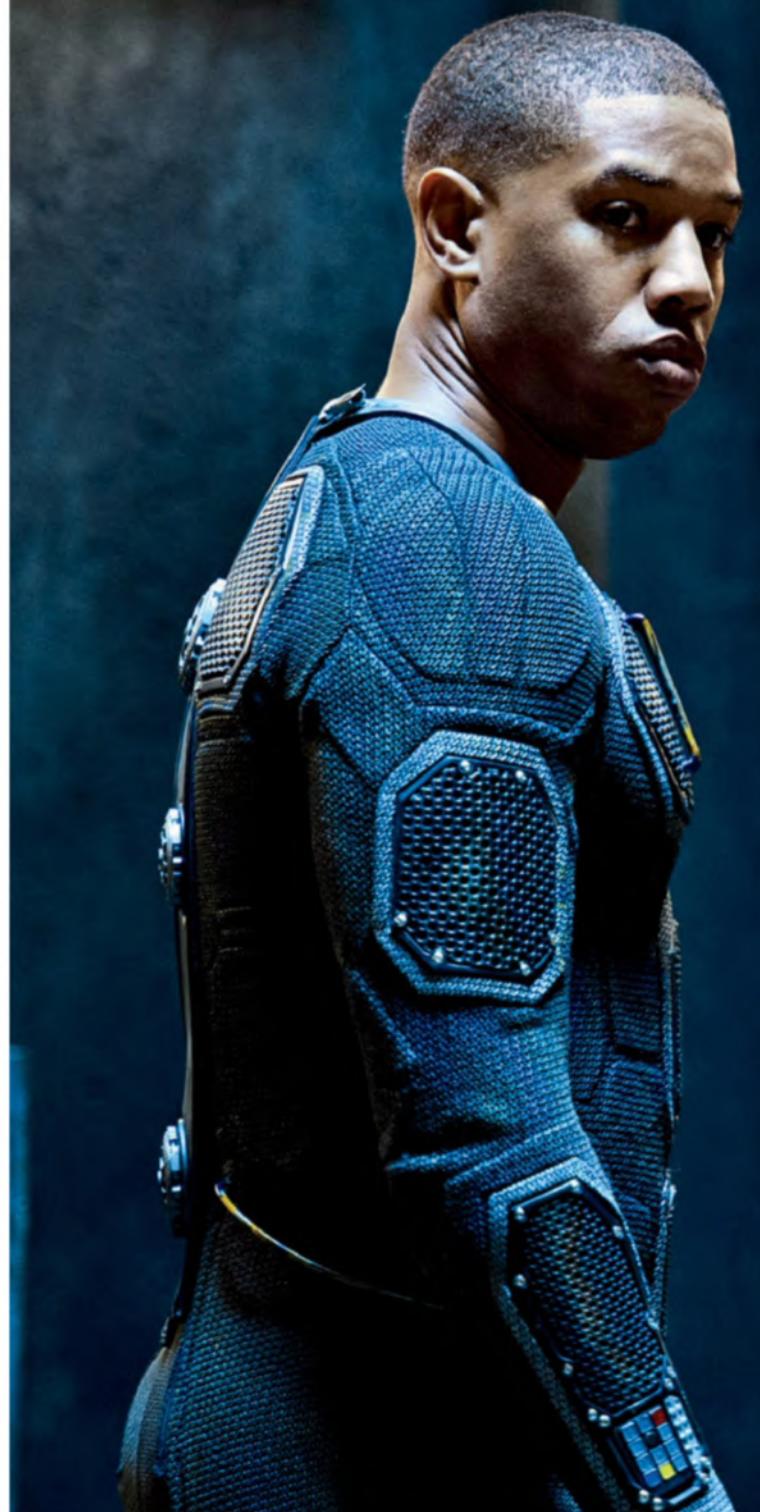
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2015 JEEP WRANGLER ALTITUDE



# BRINGING THE HEAT

ARE WE READY FOR MICHAEL B. JORDAN TO BE A SUPERHERO?

OH, YEAH! **BY CHARLI PENN**

**A**fter shaking off racially charged backlash over his casting as the next Black superhero in a summer blockbuster, magnetic leading man Michael B. Jordan, 28, prepares to leave a trail of fire at the box office. Jordan lends his signature swagger to the Human Torch, aka Johnny Storm, to help save the planet in *Fantastic Four* (August 7). Here, the remarkably humble star pauses for a moment of reflection.

**ESSENCE:** **Johnny Storm is a familiar character and a favorite of movie buffs. How did you make the role your own?**

**MICHAEL B. JORDAN:** I'm a comic book fan. I've been a fan of *Fantastic Four* and Marvel my entire life. I know the character well. He's charismatic. He's eager to kind of figure himself out. You're going to enjoy it.

**ESSENCE:** **How have you grown as a man as your career has taken flight?**

**JORDAN:** I've been fortunate to grow in my work at the same pace as I've grown as a person—one step at a time. I didn't do too much too fast. It's always a slow burn, a slow build and a slow development. I've always had an old soul about me.

**ESSENCE:** **Did you know your female fans commonly refer to you as Michael "Bae" Jordan?**

**JORDAN:** Yeah, it's funny. I do like it. As a kid, I got teased a lot...being constantly compared to Michael Jordan. With him being such a legend and an icon, it was very frustrating. And now, to hear people take ownership of my name, and there is no confusion, it's a cool feeling.

# SCENE



Dayo Okeniyi

## AFRICAN ROOTS, L.A. DREAMS

HOT ACTOR ALERT: MEET DAYO OKENIYI

**G**rowing up in Nigeria, *Terminator Genisys* costar Dayo Okeniyi caught the movie bug from a different kind of machine: the VCR. "My parents would travel to the United States and record movies for us to watch back home," recalls Okeniyi, 27, whose proper first name is Oladayo (which he says means "our wealth has become joy"). "I loved *Commando*. I watched it until the VHS tape snapped!"

Now Okeniyi gets to share the screen with Commando himself Arnold Schwar-

zenegger in a reboot of the *Terminator* franchise. Playing "a young Steve Jobs type" in *TG* wasn't a stretch for the graduate of Indiana's Anderson University: Before

landing his role as Thresh in *The Hunger Games*, he says, "I actually got a job at Apple and had to turn it down."

Instead

Okeniyi has joined the wave of thespians with African roots who are taking Hollywood by storm. "It's an amazing time to be an actor of color right now," says Okeniyi. "I'm living my dream."

—Chuck Arnold



Okeniyi and costar Jason Clarke

## NEW NAMES TO KNOW

We already love Idris, Lupita and Uzo. Now more fresh faces of African descent are making a big splash



► JOHN BOYEGA

**Born:** England

**Ancestry:** Nigerian

**Known for:** *Attack the Block*

**Next:** *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*



► CYNTHIA ERIVO

**Born:** England

**Ancestry:** Nigerian

**Known for:** U.K.'s *Sister Act*

**Next:** Broadway's *The Color Purple*

► RUTH NECCA

**Born:** Ethiopia

**Ancestry:**

Ethiopian and Irish

**Known for:**

*Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*

**Next:** *Warcraft*



## DIGITAL DIASPORA

10 INTERNATIONAL WEB SERIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA FEEDS WE'RE PLUGGED INTO

### WEB SERIES

#### 1 STROLLING

Jamaican-British filmmaker Cecile Emeke's show explores the Black British experience. [strollingseries.com](http://strollingseries.com)



The ladies of An African City



5 @AMY\_SALL This New York City-based first-generation Senegalese-American page mixes style and substance.

#### 6 @YAGAZIEEMEZEI

This Nigeria-based cartoonist and vlogger takes her followers on a colorful ride through the continent.

### TWITTER

#### 7 @AFRICASACOUNTRY

Created by Nicole Amarteifio, it follows five well-heeled Ghanaian women returning from abroad. [youtube.com/user/anafricancity](http://youtube.com/user/anafricancity)

#### 8 @BELLANAIJA

You'll find info on Nollywood stars and Nigerian music, fashion and TV here.

#### 9 @KENYANPUNDIT

Former Google Africa policy manager Ory Okolloh Mwangi tweets about tech, governmental accountability and digital activism.



#### 10 @AFRIPOPMAG

It's a front row seat to African culture, film, music and art.

—Yolanda Sangweni



TABLET EXTRAS Find out which other celebs have global roots.



**GO BACK TO WHERE IT ALL BEGAN.**



ILLUMINATION PRESENTS

# minions

**JULY 10**

IN THEATERS AND REAL D 3D

ILLUMINATION  
ENTERTAINMENT

PG

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Patrik Henry Bass

# BOOKS WE PROMISE YOU WON'T PUT DOWN

A SOAP OPERA LEGEND'S MEMOIR IS ONE OF FIVE JAW-DROPPINGLY JUICY READS THAT WILL GENTLY EASE YOU FROM SUMMER INTO FALL

## 1 THE POWER OF BLACK WOMEN

I'll say it first: Tamara Winfrey Harris's take-no-prisoners manifesto **The Sisters Are Alright: Changing the Broken Narrative of Black Women in America** (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, \$15.95) is the title everyone

should download now. Defiant without being defensive, the author uses her words as a sword to slice and slay unfair and tired stereotypes of Black women.



Tamara Winfrey Harris

## 2 RECIPE FOR LOVE

A true story: Journalist Stephanie Smith fed her boyfriend a turkey and Swiss sandwich on white bread. His response? "Honey, you are 300 sandwiches away from an engagement ring."

When the enterprising writer shared this exchange online, the Internet went after her "antiquated" boyfriend with the ferocity of the Beyhive. In her funny and touching new book, **300 Sandwiches** (Zinc Ink, \$26), we take a peek behind the counter into the couple's hearts and home.



Stephanie Smith

## 3 HISTORY LESSON

2015 isn't over yet, but I'll go out on a limb and predict that **Something Must Be Done About Prince Edward County** (Harper, \$25.99) will land on many Best Books of the

Year lists. And deservedly so. Did you know that in 1954, right after the Supreme Court's unanimous *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, a Farmville, Virginia, school system ignored the law of the land? With riveting reporting, writer Kristen Green documents the shocking saga of how Prince Edward County officials shut down its public schools, took all the supplies and created an all-White private academy.



Dolen Perkins-Valdez

## 4 CRY FREEDOM

**Wench**, Dolen Perkins-Valdez's knockout 2010 debut novel about the antebellum South, signaled the arrival of a writer to watch. **Balm** (Amistad, \$25.99) more than delivers on that promise. In her latest work, the Civil War has ended and enslavement has been abolished. We follow the journey of three strangers—Madge, Sadie and Hemp—who have arrived in Chicago searching for a better life. However, they discover that the road to freedom isn't as smooth as they'd hoped, and the past is almost impossible to bury. With *Balm*, Perkins-Valdez has created an intoxicating concoction brimming with historical details, vivid language and irresistible characters who aren't always easy to root for.

## 5 DRAMA QUEEN

I'm glad a new generation has discovered Debbi Morgan through her role as wise Estelle on Starz's breakout drama *Power*. But for many of us old-school folk, the Dunn, North Carolina, native will always be known as trailblazing heroine Angela Baxter Hubbard on the late, lamented soap opera *All My Children*. For three decades, Angie survived every crisis imaginable, often with her soul mate, Jesse, by her side. In reading

**The Monkey on My Back** (Infinite Words, \$16), the Emmy Award winner's revealing new memoir, we learn that her soap alter ego lived a fairy tale compared with some of the hellish experiences she endured in real life. But this talented thespian is no damsel in distress. The author's account of how she broke the cycle of generations of emotional trauma will earn applause from critics, and from you.



Debbi Morgan



Follow ESSENCE Editorial Projects Director Patrik Henry Bass on Twitter @PATRIKSPICKS.

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# BACK IN BLACK

A BEST-SELLING AUTHOR RETURNS WITH CHARACTERS YOU LOVE TO LOVE AND LOVE TO LOATHE

**T**wo decades ago Kimberla Lawson Roby gave up a successful career to chase her dream of becoming a writer. Since self-publishing *Behind Closed Doors* (Lenox Press) in 1997, the Rockford, Illinois, native has sold nearly 3 million copies of her page-turning novels. A dozen of those scandalous tales, dripping with heart and moral lessons, involve the Reverend Curtis Black and his messy clan.

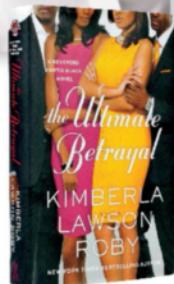
In **The Ultimate Betrayal** (Grand Central Publishing, \$20), the beleaguered pastor's folk are, as usual, up to all kinds of no good. Prodigal daughter Alicia takes center stage in this story of regret and redemption. Four years after divorcing her skirt-chasing scalawag of a second husband, our heroine finds

**“**The Rockford, Illinois, native has sold nearly 3 million copies of her page-turning novels. **”**

herself once again drawn to good-hearted Phillip Sullivan, her first. How kind is Phillip? Well, he takes Alicia back after she cheated on him. All bodes well for the lovebirds until Alicia learns that Levi Cunningham is set to leave prison. Roby readers will recall Levi was the man who broke up Alicia and Phillip's happy home. And he also sold drugs on the side.

Who can Alicia turn to? Usually, it's her BFF, Melanie. But this time around, a misperceived comment by Alicia deeply offends her cherished confidante, and soon situations spiral out of control—not only is their bond threatened but both of their lives are also at stake.

That's all you need to know to dive into this delectable read. Once you pick your favorite snack or nook in your home, you may not emerge until the weekend is over. —P.H.B.



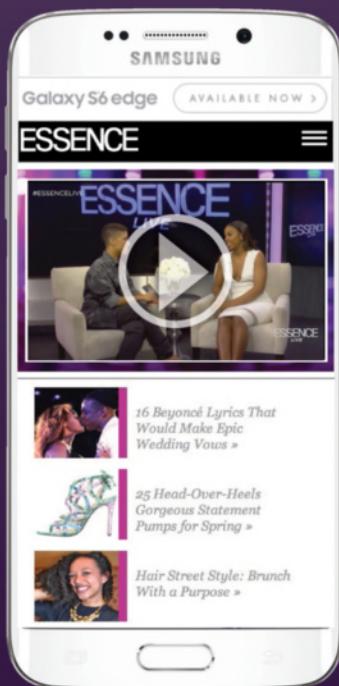
ROBY: PAUL CRAVE; BOOK STILL: TRACEY WOODS.

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# 10

## THINGS WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

BY TAYLOR LEWIS

### NEW ORLEANS: 10 YEARS AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

**B**eginning on August 23, 2005, Hurricane Katrina swept through the Caribbean and southeast United States, killing nearly 2,000 people and crippling New Orleans.

The emergency response to the city from the government proved inadequate, and survivors were left stranded, destitute and homeless for weeks. But courageous residents have poured their all into rebuilding their beloved NOLA. Though there's still much more to be done, we're shining a light on those who have worked to bring the Big Easy back to life.

#### THE FIXER

**1**lam Tucker, 32, left her dream job as a police officer to become CEO of the NOLA-based engineering company Integrated Logistical Support, Inc. (ILSI). Here, she talks about why she made the jump and how she's helping restore the city she grew up in.

**ESSENCE:** What kind of work does ILSI do?

**IAM TUCKER:** We design roadways, sewer ways, railways and waterways—anything under the street. In New Orleans, we've worked on rehabilitating the levee system. We've also collaborated on a FEMA-funded project to repair the city's sidewalks.

**ESSENCE:** You switched careers when you took over the family business at 25. How did you navigate the learning curve?

# ISSUES

**TUCKER:** I was raised in this stuff. I didn't have Barbie and Ken dolls; I had IBM computers and construction managers as friends, because I'd come here straight after school. But it really was trial by fire. For the first two years, I was wrapping my arms around all the acronyms, payment methods, contract delivery methods, everything. I wasn't afraid to ask questions. I had to get into the middle of it.

**ESSENCE:** How has your firm helped revitalize New Orleans?

**TUCKER:** Part of the city's downfall with Katrina was the broken levees on the 17th Street canal. We weren't in charge of levee inspection before Katrina, but now ILSI has inspectors out there, making sure that the levees are sound. We've also done projects with the Housing Authority of New Orleans. I think it's very important to try to get the residents back here.

**ESSENCE:** In what areas do you think the city can improve?

**TUCKER:** In predominately African-American areas, recovery has been a lot slower. We're not seeing the Ninth Ward coming back as fast as it needs to. Black [people and their] businesses have been around to help shape this city for eons, so why is it that when the recovery happens, the makeup looks completely different than before?

**ESSENCE:** Why was it important for you to work for a company that is connected to rebuilding the city?

**TUCKER:** There is no place on earth like New Orleans. This city is on the brink of something great, and it's an opportunity that we might not have had if not for Katrina. It's exciting, and I want to be a part of it. I want other people to see New Orleans for what everybody else has fallen in love with.



## CONTINUING A CULINARY LEGACY

Leah Chase, co-owner of popular creole restaurant Dooky Chase's, saw her beloved eatery close its doors after the hurricane. Since reopening the 74-year-old establishment in 2008, Chase, 92, has been **inducted into the James Beard Foundation's Who's Who of Food and Beverage in America** and has had a gallery named after her in the New Orleans Southern Food and Beverage Museum.

## 3 FROM THE GROUND UP

Eighty-one percent of the homes within **two of the three most heavily damaged parishes** (Orleans and St. Bernard) have been rebuilt or restored. Nonprofit organizations, volunteer workers and government agencies have all lent a hand in the efforts.

## 21 HEALTH CARE GAINS

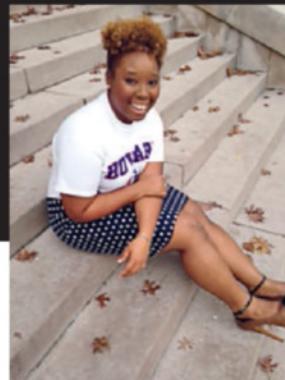
Two New Orleans health centers — located in underserved neighborhoods will receive **\$1.3 million in federal funding**, thanks to the Affordable Care Act. Odyssey House Louisiana, Inc., which suffered wind damage after Katrina, and Marillac Community Health Center, which serves more than 20,000 low-income patients, were granted the monies to help maximize access to health services.

## 5 KEEPING TRACK

In an effort to chart the city's progress, the recently launched **katrina10.org** features economic, housing and education recovery statistics, along with residents' success stories. The hub will also list information on this month's commemorative activities that will reflect on the past ten years.

## 6 A SURVIVOR'S JOURNEY

Talitha Halley was 12 when the hurricane struck and her family was forced to abandon their home, relocate to the Superdome and later to her aunt's house in Houston. This past May, Halley graduated from Howard, becoming **the first in her family to graduate from college**. "This was in God's plan for me," Halley, 22, told ESSENCE. "I was supposed to break the mold for the rest of my family."



## ECONOMIC BOON

Since 1994, New Orleans has been the host city of the annual Essence Festival. In the years following Katrina, from 2007 through 2014 (in 2006, the event was held in Houston), **the festival has helped bolster the city's economy**, bringing more than \$2 billion in revenue. Last year alone, the event drew more than 500,000 attendees and supported local wages to the tune of \$265 million.

## 8 PUTTING EDUCATION FIRST

After the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School for Science and Technology was completely flooded during Katrina, principal Doris Hicks became intent on getting the institution back in working order. In 2007 she obtained nearly \$8 million in FEMA funds to reopen the academy. **High test scores and improved student performance under her leadership** have led to the school being transferred out of the Louisiana Recovery School District, which took over at-risk, low-performing schools after the storm.



## MAKING GOOD ON A PROMISE

After the levees broke, city councilwoman LaToya Cantrell was outspoken about her plans to **restore her constituents' damaged neighborhoods**. This past spring, Cantrell, 43, helped secure \$1 million to assist people in rebuilding their homes.

“We are not just rebuilding the city that we once were, but are creating the city that we always should have been. That is more than just a slogan—it is the new New Orleans way.”

**—Mayor Mitch Landrieu, at the 2015 State of the City Address in May.**



For the latest news, follow ESSENCE Features Editor Lauren N. Williams on Twitter **@LAURNWILLIAMS**.



"There is no shame in having need," says Dorn.

## CHANGING LIVES IN A SINGLE STOP

HOW ONE WOMAN HELPS PEOPLE REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM THE GOVERNMENT

BY TAMIKA D. MALLORY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESSE DITTMAR

From an early age, Angela Dorn knew the importance of serving others. Today, as a founding member and chief legal officer of the nonprofit Single Stop, Dorn, 47, makes it easier for those who are struggling financially to gain access to critical government resources. "So many people feel as if they don't have a chance," says the New York City-based lawyer. "I want people to have as full lives as they can. There is no shame in having need."

### ESSENCE: What is Single Stop?

**ANGELA DORN:** Our mission is to provide economic opportunities that help people avoid or get out of poverty. More than \$60 billion of government resources are left on the table every year because people don't know how to access them or are fearful about accessing them. We screen applicants in a "single stop" at food pantries, charter schools and community colleges, let them find out what they may be entitled to, and assist them in applying for those benefits so they can avoid some of the indignity that may come when talking to the government about getting aid.

### ESSENCE: Who are the people that Single Stop helps?

**DORN:** We're in eight states, including Pennsylvania and Louisiana, and have reached about 1 million households, which is about 2.5 million people. Since our founding in 2007, we've helped them draw about \$3 billion in resources and services. At least 20 percent of the people who have benefited from our program are African-American women. One example is Sharmin Browne, a student at the Borough of Manhattan Community College who's raising two kids and working full-time at

**“More than \$60 billion of government resources are left on the table every year because people don't know how to access them.”**

a low-wage job. At one point the 32-year-old single mom was facing eviction. She found out about Single Stop on BMCC's campus and acquired \$2,000 to put toward her housing costs. She also received financial counseling from us to establish a budget and plan for her future. Sharmin was able to stay in school to pursue her associate's degree. Now she hopes to go to law school.

### ESSENCE: What other services does Single Stop provide?

**DORN:** We help people file their income taxes and get access to health care, child care and tax cuts. At community colleges, for example, some students have been able to double their Pell Grants. We also provide free legal services and financial counseling. Our work is responsive to individuals and their specific needs.

### ESSENCE: What's your day-to-day role?

**DORN:** While I am involved in strategy, human resources, development and board governance, my most important mandate is heading the legal department. My team oversees the negotiation of contracts and ensures that our staff and partners comply with privacy regulations.

### ESSENCE: You credit your family with the work you do today. How have they influenced you?

**DORN:** I'm a child of the Civil Rights Movement. My parents were early integrators in our community in Evanston, [Illinois]. They put that fighting spirit in me. My older brother was a star in high school, but he didn't finish college. He struggled financially and we helped him, but when it came to applying for government benefits he was reluctant to do it. He passed away at a very young age, and part of that was due to his reluctance to get help. Maybe he'd be alive today if he hadn't had that shame.

### ESSENCE: What's next for Single Stop?

**DORN:** The goal for the rest of 2015 is to hit at least 200,000 new households. We're opening up at several sites in North Carolina this month. We hope to have some HBCUs on board there, since they tend to have lower graduation rates than other four-year colleges and Black students are more likely to take out loans. Many students are using credit cards to pay for tuition and living expenses like groceries when they should be using Pell Grants or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which provides food assistance. We also plan to release an app so people can screen themselves for benefits they might qualify for. Ultimately that's the greatest success: If people stay in school, get a degree, get a job, then we'll have a long-term impact on their lives.

For more information, visit [singlestopusa.org](http://singlestopusa.org).

**Tamika D. Mallory** (@tamikadmallory) is an activist and a civil rights leader.

A full-length photograph of Rachel Maddow. She is a woman with short brown hair, smiling slightly. She is wearing a black blazer over a black top and black pants. Her arms are crossed in front of her. The background is a solid dark grey.

**“The thing  
about rights  
is they’re not  
actually  
supposed to  
be voted on.  
That’s why  
they’re called  
rights.”**

**-Rachel Maddow**

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Mo Abudu is  
transforming  
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on the continent.

# Model Moguls

HOW THREE AFRICAN  
ENTREPRENEURS ARE  
USHERING IN A NEW  
WAVE OF INNOVATIVE,  
WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES

BY FARAI GUNDAN

African women have long been at the heart of the continent's economic growth trajectory. But as African nations further open themselves up for big business and commerce, women have become more bullish in seizing career opportunities and gaining a foothold in areas traditionally held by men. We talked to three enterprising leaders who are carving out new paths for women in business and making a killing while they're at it.

# MONEY & POWER

**MO ABUDU, 50**

**CEO & EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN,  
EBONYLIFE TV  
TINAPA, NIGERIA**

Early on in her life, Mosunmula (Mo) Abudu learned the power of changing narratives around identity. Growing up in Kent, a town in England with few Blacks at the time, Abudu remembers widespread ignorance about the customs and ways of life in her family's native Nigeria. "You continually got asked the most ridiculous and mind-boggling questions like, 'Do you guys live in trees and holes in Africa?' 'Do you guys dance around fires?' and 'What do you eat for breakfast?'" Abudu says. "I think somewhere deeply buried in my subconscious was a need to tell Africa's story."

Abudu set her sights on a TV show that

would showcase African people's myriad cultures and interests. "I had seen a gap in the market for talk shows that were quint-essentially African," says Abudu. In 2005 the former oil executive purchased a DVD collection of the twentieth anniversary of the *Oprah Winfrey Show* and obtained the contact information for Harpo Studios. Though she was unable to connect with the production giant, Abudu was undeterred. She shopped pilots of her talk show around for months until finally securing a deal with DSTV, the leading pay-TV platform in Africa. In 2006, *Moments With Mo* debuted and became Africa's first syndicated daily talk show. Today it airs in 49 African countries and in the United Kingdom.

Though the talkfest resonated with

audiences across the continent, Abudu felt that her vision to portray Africa in a positive light needed an even bigger platform. She recalls, "This was what spurred me to start thinking of establishing Ebony-Life TV." Her network, which launched in 2013, is home to a bevy of programs that target a mainly young, aspirational and trendy audience. The shows—which are a mix of original programming, like *Chefrican*, a cooking show, and local adaptations of international hits, such as *Desperate Housewives Africa*—have been wildly popular for the entertainment and lifestyle channel, which reaches more than 36 million viewers every month.

As Abudu grows her media empire, she says she's guided by the mantra, "If you can think it, you can do it."



**NELLY TUIKONG, 29**  
**FOUNDER & DIRECTOR,  
PAULINE COSMETICS  
NAIROBI, KENYA**

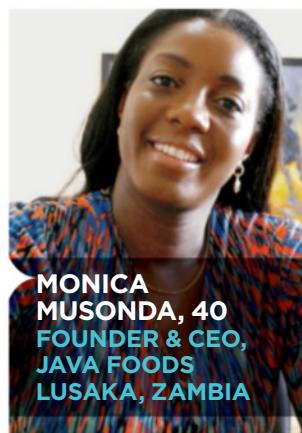
Years ago Nelly Tuikong realized that many Kenyan women would have to travel long distances to Nairobi in order to buy beauty products. She also found that makeup consumption had been on a steady rise in the country (largely due to its growing middle class). So in 2013, she decided to launch her own cosmetics line. Developing Pauline Cosmetics, which is named after Tuikong's mother, was a labor of love. "I started the business with only \$400 to produce product samples and bootstrapped my way to where we are today," explains Tuikong, a former nurse. "We started with a limited product range, zero

cash flow and only word-of-mouth marketing."

Today Pauline Cosmetics has nine employees, and according to Tuikong, the brand is in 25 stores and on track to make \$500,000 in sales by the end of 2015. Though it has been a challenge to scale, Tuikong is intent on maintaining the integrity of her brand: "I focus on manufacturers who source shea butter from Africa to really tie our products to the continent."

Constantly motivated by her customers' needs, Tuikong says this month she's adding new lip colors, eye shadow palettes, makeup brushes and foundation powders for her growing base. "I want Pauline Cosmetics to be more than just a line of products, but an experience, for our customers," she says.

Pauline Cosmetics' instant success may seem out of reach, but Tuikong advises women to "start wherever you are. Take advantage of what you have—whether it's free Wi-Fi to start a blog or one piece of clothing you can post on Facebook Marketplace. And then every day, build momentum toward what you want to do."



**MONICA  
MUSONDA, 40**  
**FOUNDER & CEO,  
JAVA FOODS  
LUSAKA, ZAMBIA**

In 2011 Monica Musonda had a job she loved, working as general counsel for billion-dollar industrial enterprise Dangote Group in Lagos, Nigeria, when the idea came to her to start a food company in her native Zambia. "Malnutrition is one of the leading challenges facing southern Africa, particularly in cities that have experienced rapid urban-

ization," says Musonda. So the Zambian- and London-trained lawyer got to work on a new project: producing affordable, locally made food for southern and eastern Africa.

How did an attorney develop one of the most successful food businesses in Africa? "At the Dangote Group, I was exposed to different sides of the business," says Musonda. "I saw up close the way [CEO and world's richest Black person Aliko Dangote] runs his business, the way he thinks about strategy, pricing, markets."

In less than two years, Musonda's eeZee Instant Noodles has become Zambia's leading instant noodle brand, with average sales of half a million packets monthly. Java Foods has also begun developing a cereal made from local products, such as maize, soya and sorghum.

"We want to impact lives by purchasing crops from smallholder farmers and by ensuring the consumer has affordable foods," says Musonda. "We are doing this one product at a time."

**Farai Gundan** is the cofounder of faraimedia.com, an online and mobile advertising platform that focuses on Africa.



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WE  
WENT  
TO  
AFRICA  
TO FIND  
INSPIRATION,  
YET IT WAS  
ERYKAH BADU  
WHO MOTIVATED  
US. FROM THE WARM,  
LAZULI-TONED WATERS  
OF ZANZIBAR TO THE  
“AFRIPOLITAN” ENERGY OF  
NAIROBI, WHEREVER BADU  
WENT SHE CHANNELED  
AUTHENTICITY. SHE COMMUNED  
WITH THE ANCESTORS. SHE SANG  
FOR THE PEOPLE. SHE WALKED  
WITH THE WARRIORS. SHE DANCED  
WITH THE SPIRITS. INTRODUCING  
BADU’S MOTHERLAND

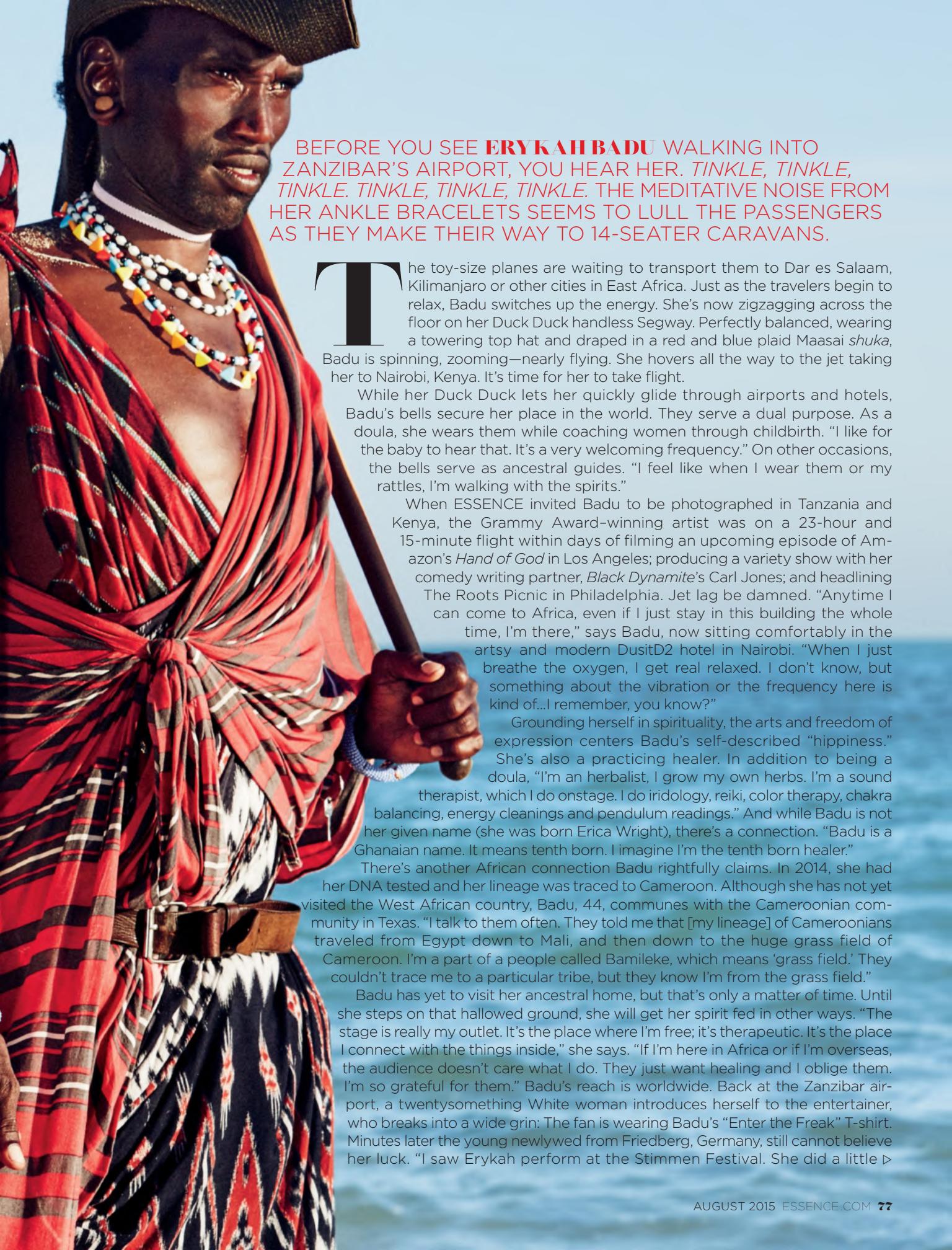
BY CORI MURRAY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY WARWICK SAINT  
FASHION EDITOR: JOIEE THORPE



Erykah Badu, with  
Yona Mbambire,  
a Maasai, at The  
Residence hotel  
in Kizimkazi  
Beach, Zanzibar

On Badu: a **Desigual**  
sweater, **Dannijo** cuff,  
**Stella & Dot** feather  
necklace (worn  
as bracelets), **Holst**  
+ **Lee** bracelets  
and **Iradj Moini**  
snake bracelet. Rings,  
Badu's own.

Previous page:  
She wears  
**alice + olivia**  
by **Stacey**  
**Bendet** culottes,  
**Alexis Bittar**  
cuff and **Amanda**  
**Marmer** nail ring,  
Feathers,  
stylist's own.  
Top hat,  
Badu's own.



BEFORE YOU SEE ERYKAH BADU WALKING INTO ZANZIBAR'S AIRPORT, YOU HEAR HER. *TINKLE, TINKLE, TINKLE, TINKLE, TINKLE, TINKLE*. THE MEDITATIVE NOISE FROM HER ANKLE BRACELETS SEEMS TO LULL THE PASSENGERS AS THEY MAKE THEIR WAY TO 14-SEATER CARAVANS.

**T**he toy-size planes are waiting to transport them to Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro or other cities in East Africa. Just as the travelers begin to relax, Badu switches up the energy. She's now zigzagging across the floor on her Duck Duck handless Segway. Perfectly balanced, wearing a towering top hat and draped in a red and blue plaid Maasai *shuka*, Badu is spinning, zooming—nearly flying. She hovers all the way to the jet taking her to Nairobi, Kenya. It's time for her to take flight.

While her Duck Duck lets her quickly glide through airports and hotels, Badu's bells secure her place in the world. They serve a dual purpose. As a doula, she wears them while coaching women through childbirth. "I like for the baby to hear that. It's a very welcoming frequency." On other occasions, the bells serve as ancestral guides. "I feel like when I wear them or my rattles, I'm walking with the spirits."

When ESSENCE invited Badu to be photographed in Tanzania and Kenya, the Grammy Award-winning artist was on a 23-hour and 15-minute flight within days of filming an upcoming episode of Amazon's *Hand of God* in Los Angeles; producing a variety show with her comedy writing partner, *Black Dynamite*'s Carl Jones; and headlining The Roots Picnic in Philadelphia. Jet lag be damned. "Anytime I can come to Africa, even if I just stay in this building the whole time, I'm there," says Badu, now sitting comfortably in the artsy and modern DusitD2 hotel in Nairobi. "When I just breathe the oxygen, I get real relaxed. I don't know, but something about the vibration or the frequency here is kind of...I remember, you know?"

Grounding herself in spirituality, the arts and freedom of expression centers Badu's self-described "hippiness." She's also a practicing healer. In addition to being a doula, "I'm an herbalist, I grow my own herbs. I'm a sound therapist, which I do onstage. I do iridology, reiki, color therapy, chakra balancing, energy cleanings and pendulum readings." And while Badu is not her given name (she was born Erica Wright), there's a connection. "Badu is a Ghanaian name. It means tenth born. I imagine I'm the tenth born healer."

There's another African connection Badu rightfully claims. In 2014, she had her DNA tested and her lineage was traced to Cameroon. Although she has not yet visited the West African country, Badu, 44, communes with the Cameroonian community in Texas. "I talk to them often. They told me that [my lineage] of Cameroonians traveled from Egypt down to Mali, and then down to the huge grass field of Cameroon. I'm a part of a people called Bamileke, which means 'grass field.' They couldn't trace me to a particular tribe, but they know I'm from the grass field."

Badu has yet to visit her ancestral home, but that's only a matter of time. Until she steps on that hallowed ground, she will get her spirit fed in other ways. "The stage is really my outlet. It's the place where I'm free; it's therapeutic. It's the place I connect with the things inside," she says. "If I'm here in Africa or if I'm overseas, the audience doesn't care what I do. They just want healing and I oblige them. I'm so grateful for them." Badu's reach is worldwide. Back at the Zanzibar airport, a twenty-something White woman introduces herself to the entertainer, who breaks into a wide grin: The fan is wearing Badu's "Enter the Freak" T-shirt. Minutes later the young newlywed from Friedberg, Germany, still cannot believe her luck. "I saw Erykah perform at the Stimmen Festival. She did a little ▷



"The white dots are used in a candomblé ceremony, when young women come of age and are accepted as sacred vessels," Badu says of the African-derived religion heavily practiced in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil.

Erykah wears a **Mordekai by Ken Borochov** feather headpiece (worn as necklace), **Rebecca Minkoff** poncho and **Kut from the Kloth** jumpsuit.



bit of stuff with the drum board when she was deejaying. I really liked it. I liked her style. I like how she sings. I love everything about her," she gushes.

The feeling is mutual for Badu, especially when she's performing for her fans in Africa. "There's something I'm doing that reminds them of something ancient, futuristic, and I can tell. Definitely," she says, while staring at oversize agave plants and palms blanketing Zanzibar's Indian Ocean coastline. "They feel I have some kind of purpose and when we all get together it's kind of all fulfilled. They feel that more than I feel that.... Isn't that ironic? But I just fulfill it and that's it. Doing service makes me feel fulfilled."

Not every trip abroad has been easy. In 2012, Badu was banned from performing a concert in Malaysia after a promotional poster was deemed offensive by some Muslims there. In the poster, her body is adorned with several temporary tattoos, including one with the word *Allah* written in Arabic. Badu says, for the record, there were other religious names on her skin as well. Then two years later, she came under fire from the Human Rights Foundation and the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights after she performed for Swaziland's King Mswati III. Both organizations denounced her performance for "a brutal dictator" and said in written statements that "Badu praises Africa's last absolute monarch, a strongman who imprisons dissidents."

Badu quickly took to Twitter in response to the criticism, and explained to *The Dallas News* she was invited to perform by Jacob "The Jeweler" Arabo as a last-minute favor because she was already on the continent—simple as that. Badu issued the following statement: "There is no place on the planet I won't visit if invited to go to the people wherever they are in or whatever condition." Today the media fallout still seems to be a sore point for the artist. "It was just a horrible back and forth," says Badu, visibly exasperated.

"I've been to Swaziland several times. I've worked with the kids there, the schools there, the arts programs," she says. "But after this one time, the human rights organizations were

bad-mouthing me [in their attacks on the king], which had nothing to do with me. I had to make sure those human rights organizations understood I was a human being too. They were slandering my name and treating me as if I'm responsible for any of those alleged crimes. But who was going to protect my rights?"

Thankfully, the experience hasn't clouded her feelings about connecting with Africa. Badu's first trip to the continent came in 2001. She visited Johannesburg, South Africa—where she met Nelson Mandela—as well as Cape Town and Soweto. Her most memorable experience there was visiting orphanages for babies of parents who had died of AIDS. "While we were there, they explained how some of the babies have never been held. So my little brother Eevin and I just took the day and held each baby one at a time," she says. "Some of them we could not hold because their little muscles and bones [were too fragile]." At another orphanage, Badu met a little boy named Lucky who left a lasting impression. "Lucky played the piano. He was so cool," says Badu. "That was a memorable trip. Not only did I get to do a concert, but I also got to feed my other side."

Since releasing her last project in 2010, Badu has been crisscrossing the globe recording bits and pieces of new music. She confesses, a bit wearily, that she doesn't know what her seventh album will be. She does know she's starting with the drum. "I could have stayed in Dallas and went to the African community and got some badass players, but it's something about spending the record label's money on an African trip that really makes me feel..." says Badu, breaking into a sly smile. Jokes aside, she says, "It has helped playing here on this soil." In addition to recording in Kenya, Nigeria—where she hangs with Femi Kuti, who's like a brother to her—and South Africa, Badu has recorded drumming sessions in New Zealand, Australia, Brazil and Cuba. "When you hear the rhythm, everyone knows what the drum is talking about. In every culture it was like that," she says. "There's definitely a commonality: It's the authenticity of the rhythms. Each rhythm means something, and it's very specific to a specific thing, whether it's a deity or a time of day or a rite of passage."

Whatever form Badu's new music takes, audiences can trust it will be rooted in something real—it's the only way Badu knows how to be. "I've matured as an artist, and as a woman, a human being," she says. "When I perform, I never know what people like. I'm a deejay, so I have to keep up on what's going on in the world, but I just don't know what they're going to like and I just have to trust myself and be honest. That's my only job."

---

**Cori Murray** (@corimurray) is ESSENCE's entertainment director. She interviewed television's game changers for our cover story last May. ▷



**Jill Bishop** is a consultant who splits her time between Africa and Atlanta. She was our fabulous guide and helped us "handle" East Africa.



**Badu and "Stacey"**  
on the grounds of  
**Giraffe Manor** in  
Nairobi, Kenya

On Badu: a **Cynthia Rowley** dress, **Daphna Simon** ring and her own necklace.

Opposite page: She wears an **Elouinia Exantus** crown and **Amanda Marmer** nail ring.

**Hair**, Derick Monroe.  
**Makeup**, Frank Guyton/  
[kenbarboza.com](http://kenbarboza.com).

# THE PARADIGM OF JOY

BY  
E. BADU

There's this natural instinct we have as human beings. Regardless of our position, religion, color or kind, we all have a primal desire for immediate, and almost unwavering, **JOY**. Eventually, through the experience of events and circumstance, we learn that this desire just may be unreasonable and unnatural. We watch our emotions sway as we are affected and influenced by the energy around us. Our own resistance to "unpleasantness" restricts our movement. In a self-medicated state, we start to become addicted to our pain. In some cases it even starts to define us. We wear masks to protect ourselves and alas lose sight of who we are. Drained physically, spiritually and emotionally, we become ill and left with very little energy to cope. Our service to others becomes exhausting. Our breathing becomes shallow. **JOY** seems so far. Now we are stuck in our own minds, filled with random thoughts and collected fears. This place has become our world. We know we are imbalanced. Something must change. How do we portion our busy lives to give the proper attention to our inner beings; the part of us that, at its core, regulates our mental, emotional and vital wellness? Perhaps we change our state of being by taking a look inside and simply changing our perspective and perception.

**BE STILL. OBSERVE. IDENTIFY. ACCEPT. ELIMINATE.**  
The wise woman knows instinctually that in order to truly realize herself she must be still. She must give up things that no longer evolve her by first identifying what they are. She realizes that the ultimate human **JOY** we seek can only be found in the full acceptance of who we really are and not in the avatars we've created to define ourselves. When she is fully present and can see her true self clearly, she realizes that the very need for **JOY** dissolves along with the need to resist pain. She replaces them with humility, for she now trusts the natural flow of life. She becomes one with the all. It is in that very moment of complete acceptance where she is transformed. It is in that state of awareness that she expands and contracts and breathes life into her thoughts. She now knows that those thoughts become her reality. She has always known. She is

**THE SAGE.**  
**THE MEDICINE WOMAN.**  
**THE DOULA.**  
**THE WITCH DOCTOR.**  
**THE FORTUNE TELLER.**  
**THE WISDOM KEEPER.**  
**THE SANGOMA.**  
**THE MGANGA.**  
**THE MCHAUI.**  
**THE HEALER.**

We must remember that we are powerful beyond measure. Each obstacle we are faced with is another opportunity to use our power. It is a step toward our greatness. After all, we have asked to be great. □



## BEAUTY NOTE

Erykah's eyelashes are accented with blue and red tips. She named the lashes "Maasai" after the color combos often used in the tribe's *shukas* (wraps).

Get the look by using **Jay Manuel Beauty** **The Everything Mascara** in Royale (\$26, [jaymanuelbeauty.com](http://jaymanuelbeauty.com)) and **Ciaté Lash Chalk** in Giggle (\$17, [ciatelondon.com](http://ciatelondon.com)).



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREG VORE

AGAINST A BACKDROP  
OF THE **SERENGETI**  
NATIONAL PARK IN  
TANZANIA AND UNDER  
THE FIERCE PROTECTION  
OF **MAASAI** ELDERS,  
OUR MUSE BROUGHT  
PRE-FALL FASHION  
TO LIFE

FASHION EDITOR: JOIE THORPE



Maki Oh  
"Calabar"  
gown. Cocoa  
Jewelry  
necklaces.  
Emu  
Australia  
"Ainslie"  
boots. ▷

## Wild at Heart

Sass & Bide  
dress, **Melinda**  
**Maria** "Cobra"  
ring, **Rebecca**  
**Minkoff**  
"Isole" boots.





## Maasai Majesty

Our model strikes a pose under the watchful eye of a tribesman.

**Christos Costarellos**  
gown. **Mordekai**  
**by Ken Borochov**  
Mohawk headpiece.  
**MeharyJewel**  
necklace and cuff.  
**Ben-Amun** by  
**Isaac Manevitz**  
fringe bracelet.  
**Cocoa Jewelry**  
bracelet. **Emu**  
**Australia** boots. ▷





## African Sky Goddess

Tracy Reese coat and top. Camilla shorts. MeharyJewel pendant. Cocoa Jewelry bar necklace. Rebecca Minkoff "Isole" boots.



## Silver Fox

VMT vest. **Va Bien**  
bustier. **Milly**  
trousers. **Blaine**  
**Bowen** silver rings.  
**Mordekai by Ken**  
**Borochov** black  
knuckle ring. **Sophia**  
**Webster** sandals. ▷



## Nighttime Maneuvers

Maasai elders Edward Olekongwe and Simon Alais act as honor guard for our model.

**D**Squared2 body stocking. **Sass & Bide** harness. **Blaine Bowen** rings. **Sorel** boots.



**TABLET EXTRAS** See more photos from our African adventure.



## Mixed Message

Amelia Toro vest,  
and cropped pants.

Etnia Barcelona  
sunglasses.

Laruicci body chain.  
Melinda Maria "Cobra"  
ring. Sophia Webster  
gladiator sandals. □

For details, see  
Where to Buy.

**Hair**, Derick Monroe.  
**Makeup**, Frank Guyton/  
kenbarboza.com.  
**Model**, Tshepiso  
Ralehlathe/Ice Models.



New York City-based photographer  
**Greg Vore** joined the ESSENCE team  
in Africa, capturing powerful frames  
for this special style feature and more.

# BRIDGING THE GAP

## A CONVERSATION ON THE BLACK DIASPORA IN AMERICA



(Seated from left) Natasha Lightfoot, Yolanda Sangweni, Luvvie Ajayi and Lola Ogunnaike.  
(Standing from left) Metanoya Z. Webb, Salamishah Tillet and Nikole Hannah-Jones.

Last year when 18-year-old Ghanaian-American Kwasi Enin gained acceptance to all eight Ivy League schools, *USA Today* ran an article on his accomplishment. Quoting a college admissions expert, the article read, in part, “He’s not a typical African-American kid.” Later, the newspaper cut that section of the quote from the piece, but the implication remained clear: Because Enin is African, his work ethic and interest in education must be stronger than that of a Black American kid, hence, his attractiveness to the nation’s top schools. The debate that occurred on social media afterward highlights the stereotypes and divisive opinions that tend to drive a wedge between us all: African-Americans, Africans and Caribbean-Americans. Aiming to explore these tensions further, *ESSENCE* hosted a discussion with six thought leaders, writers, journalists and academics from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Moderator and *ESSENCE.com* entertainment editor Yolanda Sangweni centered the conversation on this question: What are the factors that contribute to the rift between Blacks in the African diaspora and what can we do to close that gap?

BY AYANA D. BYRD | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARGARITA CORPORAN

## WHAT DIVIDES US

**Though sociologists have concluded it can take just one generation for Black immigrants to identify culturally as American, stark distinctions of “us” against “them” persist. *ESSENCE* began the discussion by asking panelists if the separation between African-Americans, Caribbean-Americans and Africans is something they have encountered personally, and why they think such attitudes exist.**

**LUVVIE AJAYI:** I wrote a [popular] blog post about the relationship between Africans and African-Americans, because someone on Twitter asked what I felt about the word *akata*. It is a Nigerian word, although a lot of West Africans use it to identify African-Americans. It’s so commonplace most people don’t know *akata* means “wild animal”—most just think it’s a word for African-American.

**NATASHA LIGHTFOOT:** I’m West Indian, married to someone who’s half West Indian, half African-American, and there’s a lot of that—acknowledging there are differences within the broader Black community in the U.S. There’s also a long history...of building networks together. It’s never hard and fast, the lines of separation between what is African-American, African, West Indian and Afro-Latin American.

**SALAMISHAH TILLET:** I’m half Trinidadian, half African-American. The story in my family is that my mother wasn’t as welcomed into my father’s family because she is African-American. So I had that tension at the root of my biography. But for me it’s been about finding points of connection politically, intellectually and historically and trying to appreciate differences. So when you think of someone like Audre Lorde, she is both Caribbean and African-American. Or Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who’s Nigerian, but moves

in and out of these identity spaces. Or Edwidge Danticat, who is Haitian-American. But I am also quite conscious of African-Americans who have been here for multiple generations and had unique experiences and struggles.

**LIGHTFOOT:** I think a lot of Black immigrants arrive in the U.S. not fully aware of the kinds of struggles that African-Americans, who have been here since the days of enslavement, have had to endure. I firmly acknowledge that my ability to be educated at an Ivy League school and now be an educator at an Ivy League school is about the sorts of struggles that were won by people who were here long before me. And when my parents arrived, they arrived at the right time so those kinds of opportunities could be mine to take on.

**AJAYI:** When I was 9 and showed up in the U.S., I had no idea what slavery was. I wasn’t taught about the Middle Passage in history class in Nigeria. My formative years, in terms of learning about race ▷

and forming my ideas about ethnicity, were in college. If you come here when you're 35, you don't get to take 18 Afro classes to get the information you need to know. So you're carrying around the idea that if I get here and I was a doctor back home and I'm a cabdriver here and I somehow sent my kids to school and they somehow end up being Ph.D.'s, why couldn't you, and you've been here this whole time?

**METANOYA Z. WEBB:** Coming from a West Indian and Jamaican household, there were these [ideas about] the difference between Africans, African-Americans and Caribbean children. If that's constantly drilled into you, you have to unlearn those things you were taught.

**LOLA OGUNNAIKE:** There was an understanding in my house when I was growing up that you weren't supposed to fraternize with certain types of Black Americans. That if you came home speaking too much slang, or if you weren't as focused on your studies as you had been before, there was a fear that you were adopting Black American ways. And, if my parents had their choice, all of my friends would have been Asian-American or Indian-American students—other immigrant, model minorities.

**WEBB:** In Caribbean homes, as well. We're taught you're kind of better than certain people.

**TILLET:** This myth of Black Americans not being academically competitive, or interested in education, is so ridiculous. I mean, the long history of African-Americans establishing schools, seeking education for their kids, despite all intentions of the state and private groups to disenfranchise children through lack of education—it's just frustrating to me. I know it's long-standing, people believe it, and Tiger Moms write books about it, but it's bullsh-t.

**NIKOLE HANNAH-JONES:** What often gets erased [in discussions about immigration] is that we are literally one generation out of legal apartheid in this country. My dad was born into Jim Crow. We don't acknowledge that the gains African-Americans have made since the end of legal apartheid, which was 1968, have been tremendous. Look at our graduation rates, our college attendance rates, our foray

into middle-class jobs. What's said is, "You've been here forever, and you guys got your freedom, and why aren't you doing anything with it?"

**OGUNNAIKE:** I've often found myself in the position of having to defend Black Americans to my parents. A lot of our debates centered around the lack of appreciation for the struggle that actually gave them opportunity to come to this country and be successful.

**HANNAH-JONES:** That immigration policy was changed by the Civil Rights Movement. There was a cap on [the number of people] who could come from Black countries until the movement.

**LIGHTFOOT:** The cap was started in the 1920's and didn't end until 1965, right in the middle of [civil rights] legislation.

**HANNAH-JONES:** You have, on one hand, people from the continent saying, "We're not all in the middle of a war, we're not starving, we're not all that, don't judge us." But then they come to the United States and judge 40 million people as being one way as well. So we're both doing it, because we both don't want to be on the bottom.

## WHAT BRINGS US TOGETHER

**Of the 42 million people who checked "Black" on the last census, a record 3.8 million are foreign-born. Studies predict that by 2060, almost 17 percent of the U.S. Black population will be immigrants (with the majority coming from Jamaica, Haiti, Nigeria and Ethiopia). Our panelists were asked, "Should people of the African diaspora harness their power in numbers and unify? Or is this an unrealistic expectation?"**

**LIGHTFOOT:** There are all these different subgroups that we need to be acknowledging. Within the Caribbean diaspora, there's the whole "big island versus small island" thing. So there might be Jamaicans, Guyanese and Trinidadians, sort of as a large group of people who outnumber the smaller island folks. I'm coming from a place like Antigua, and the Antiguan community in New York City is small, but I tend to find community

Our panelists were asked, "How do you self-identify?"



### LOLA OGUNNAIKE, 39

**Journalist and cohost of *Arise Entertainment 360 TV!* series** "I identify as Black and Nigerian-American."



### SALAMISHAH TILLET, 39

**Associate professor of Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania**

"African-American, primarily. But then also Trinidadian-American. It changes depending on the context. And Black."



### NIKOLE HANNAH-JONES, 39

**Staff writer, *The New York Times Magazine*** "I identify as Black."

### NATASHA LIGHTFOOT, 37

**Assistant professor of history at Columbia University** "Black primarily. But then also West Indian or Antiguan. I identify as part of the diaspora."





### METANOYA Z. WEBB, 32

Travel and fashion writer, creator of [globetrottingstiletto.com](http://globetrottingstiletto.com)  
"I identify as Jamaican."

### LUVVIE AJAYI, 30

Writer, cultural critic and creator of [awesomelyluvvie.com](http://awesomelyluvvie.com)  
"I identify as Nigerian first."



### YOLANDA SANGWENI, 38

ESSENCE.com entertainment editor and creator of [afripopmag.com](http://afripopmag.com)  
"I identify as African-American. I'm very African. And I'm very American."



with some of the other small islands like St. Kitts or Anguilla or Nevis.

**TILLET:** We may not always appreciate it as such, but I do think Black people in the U.S., despite all these differences, vote pretty consistently in the same way [Democratic].

**SANGWENI:** It's funny; I feel like I became more African in America. I knew nothing about Black South African history, because they didn't teach it in school. And it was only in coming here that I found out about Nigeria, I found out about Jamaica. So there are times when we feel like we are separated, but there's so much unity happening here.

**LIGHTFOOT:** If we think of the history of Pan-Africanism, I would say some of its earliest iterations happened with the Garvey movement here in the U.S. And that's something that brought together Africans, African-Americans and West Indians. And all those folks had a language for the ways they could identify, because the structures of colonialism and capitalism threw them into places they normally wouldn't be in together.

It is not just about [living] together in, say, a building or on a block. The active ways that people have historically sought out community are going to be the same ways that people continue to build community. It's a self-selective process. This moment that we're in now [is one] where no amount of accent, birthplace [means anything] in the face of police brutality, of extralegal vigilante violence against Black people, Black children. We don't have the leisure to decide whether we need to get together in this moment.

**HANNAH-JONES:** You never could come to this country as a Black person and it mattered that you weren't born here, when it came to violence. There's never going to be a unified Black community—there have always been Black communities. They're very different, but you bond over the things that are necessary for you to build community.

**TILLET:** How do African-Americans engage Africa and the Caribbean today? Is it primarily through tourism? What are those other points of solidarity, because ones around Black/White binaries don't work everywhere we go?

**SANGWENI:** Hip-hop culture has done amazing things for solidarity. When you

go to certain parts of Africa and you're African-American, it's like, "Oh, brother, teach me that hip-hop thing." There's a certain thing of wanting to be like African-Americans but not wanting to be African-Americans.

**TILLET:** For me, it's about political solidarity. I went to Kenya as a junior in college with a sense of some utopia [about Africa], and I was sexually assaulted there. So it changed from being solidarity only around race to actually thinking about the lives of Kenyan women and their vulnerability. It went from Pan-Africanism to what we would call Third World feminism, or African feminism.

I work with women in South Africa around violence against women. These forms of oppression are quite similar to what African-American women are experiencing. There are all these other lines of solidarity that I think we often don't pursue, because we only think of race. But how do we create solidarity in ending homophobia, ending transphobia, [and the] HIV/AIDS crisis?

**HANNAH-JONES:** We also need to keep in mind the ongoing struggle domestically. When you think about the two most notorious police brutality cases in New York City—Abner Louima and Amadou Diallo—they were immigrants. In understanding that, when you see Baltimore exploding or Ferguson exploding, solidarity also needs to be with immigrant communities, joined in that struggle that continues here as well.

Harry Belafonte (who is Jamaican-American) was flying money in to the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement at the risk of his own life. And the strong Black nationalist presence in Brooklyn came from the Caribbean.

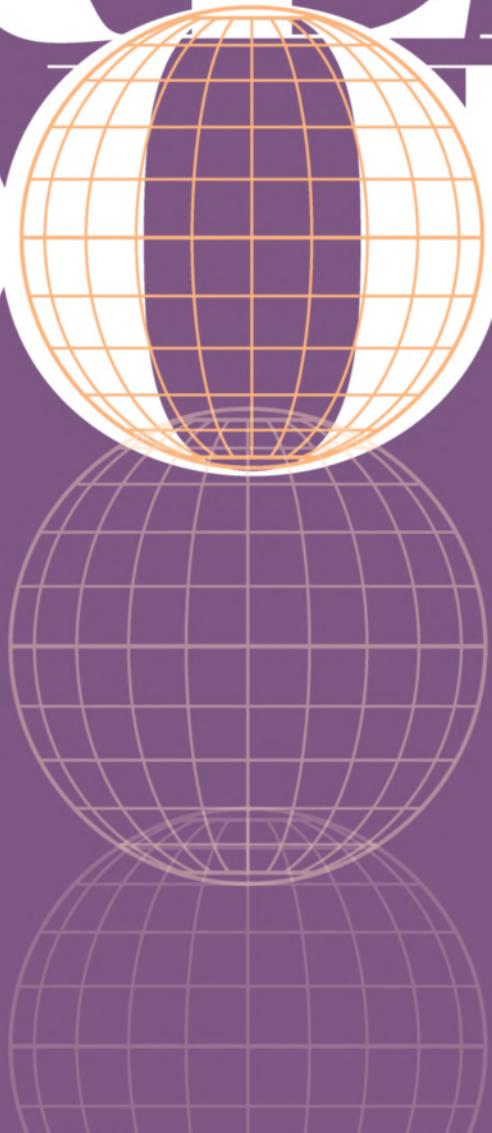
**LIGHTFOOT:** There is something in this country that is about wanting to silence the retelling of our histories that we need to actively fight against. Some of that is about making sure we're educating ourselves and those coming up behind us to know our connections are not new. Our tensions are not new. And so we don't have to reinvent the wheel when we're trying to think of ways to overcome them. □

**Ayana D. Byrd** is a Brooklyn-based journalist currently writing her first novel.



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# THEIR REAL WORLD



FROM A GENOCIDE SURVIVOR TO AN AFRICAN-AUSSIE, WE WENT BEYOND OUR BORDERS AND DISCOVERED WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A BLACK WOMAN ABROAD

REPORTED BY BRITNI DANIELLE

ILLUSTRATION BY ALICIA MALESANI



## AFRICA

**NADINE NIYITEGEKA, 23**

DEVELOPMENT AND  
RECRUITMENT ASSOCIATE,  
AKILAH INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN,  
THE FIRST ALL-FEMALE  
COLLEGE IN RWANDA  
KIGALI, RWANDA

**ESSENCE:** You were just 2 years old when the 1994 Rwandan genocide took place. It lasted 100 days and almost 1 million people, mostly Tutsis, were killed in the violence. How has it shaped you?

**NADINE NIYITEGEKA:** We lost some of our family members during the genocide. My mother and my siblings survived because we took refuge in a Catholic church. The killers would come every day to attack because one of the priests was actually involved in the strife. One day we asked, "Mom, are they going to kill us?"

Even though I was young, some memories stick in your mind. Growing up without seeing my aunts and my grandfather affected me, and it made me keep asking, "Why aren't they here?"

To live in a country and stay in the same neighborhood where people killed your family isn't that easy, but I'm glad we managed to live and get through it.

**ESSENCE:** How did you end up at the Akilah Institute for Women?

**NIYITEGEKA:** I was working in a grocery store and my boss heard about the institute and immediately thought I would be a good fit. I didn't know if I could afford it, but Akilah covers 85 percent of your school fees if admitted. After I graduated,

they hired me as a recruitment and development associate. Now I help with fund-raising, speak at events and meet with our supporters and donors.

**ESSENCE:** Rwanda has changed a lot since 1994. What do you want people to know?

**NIYITEGEKA:** Rwanda is not only about genocide. Today, Rwanda is much safer. It's a country of people who are willing to change it to have a better nation. I'm so proud that my country made impossible decisions to move forward, reunify and live together again.

**ESSENCE:** What do you love most about living in Kigali?

**NIYITEGEKA:** I like the values and heart of the people. We have an interesting thing we do on the last Saturday of the month called *Umuganda*, which is a community service where people gather to clean the neighborhoods. It's mandatory, but people love doing it. Everybody gets together and cleans—including the president!

A lot of people want to focus on the negative; it's human nature. When I'm in the States, people ask about the genocide, but they don't ask about tourism or the government or the technology sector. Many interesting things are happening in Rwanda today. The genocide was one of the biggest atrocities to ever occur, but we want to move forward.

### RWANDA FACTOID

RWANDA LEADS  
THE WORLD IN  
THE PERCENTAGE  
OF WOMEN IN  
GOVERNMENT.



## AUSTRALIA

**NAJAD ABDULLAHI, 33**

INTERNATIONAL JOURNALIST  
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

**ESSENCE:** You were born and raised in Melbourne, but how did your family end up in Australia?

**NAJAD ABDULLAHI:** The civil war in Somalia was pretty intense, and my family was given a choice to go to the U.S., Canada or Australia. My father believed the education system was much better in Australia, and there's somewhat of a meritocracy in this country. But that's not to say there isn't institutionalized racism here, because there is.

**ESSENCE:** How does this affect Black Australians?

**ABDULLAHI:** To be brutally honest, it's not easy to find a job if you have an ethnic-sounding name. As soon as I finished my master's in journalism, I left Australia to work overseas. The youth unemployment rate here is high and there are not that many opportunities. There are few job prospects. I know engineers who are working in fruit factories. Australia has a



# ASIA

**SABINE MAURA, 30**

ACTING PROJECT MANAGER, PLAN INTERNATIONAL, AN ORGANIZATION THAT WORKS TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

BANGKOK, THAILAND

**ESSENCE: Why did you move to Bangkok?**

**SABINE MAURA:** I came here to finish the hours needed for my master's degree in social innovation and leadership at Boston College. For a while, it was nuts. One week I was considering Turkey, another it was South Africa and another it was Spain. I had a job interview over Skype, and at the end the supervisor said, "So how quickly can you get to Bangkok?"

**ESSENCE: What were your first impressions?**

**MAURA:** Bangkok is the kind of place where you either love it or you hate it. Thankfully, I love it. Walking down streets, I see a million things happening. There are food vendors every 10 feet, and there are people who are living by motorcycles on

very casual attitude toward racism. Famous footballers have been called monkeys and the N-word. If you go to remote areas of Australia, Aborigines are living in Third World conditions.

**ESSENCE: Do you identify as Australian or Somali?**

**ABDULLAHI:** I'm a bit of both. I am Australian because I was born here, I have an Australian accent and went to school here, but I'm also very close to my Somali heritage. I guess I could say I'm African-Aussie.

**ESSENCE: Are there many "African-Aussies" and is it a popular term?**

**ABDULLAHI:** As the years have pro-

gressed, more African families have come to Australia—a wide range of Somalians, Ethiopians and West Africans as well. A few of them call themselves African-Aussie. But many East Africans here don't consider themselves Australian. They feel left out of society and don't see themselves as part of the Australian way of life. And Australians have no problem telling you any different.

## AUSTRALIA FACTOID

# 2,245

AFRICAN-AMERICANS LIVE IN AUSTRALIA, ACCORDING TO THE 2011 CENSUS.

the sidewalk. There are things hanging down, like wiring from telephone poles and the umbrellas on carts. Bangkok feels like a city that has its own energy in a very special way. It's up there with New York City and New Orleans and Paris.

**ESSENCE: What's it like being a Black woman living in Thailand?**

**MAURA:** Friends who were visiting recently were walking in a very touristy area and crossed paths with a couple of Black people. It was such a rare encounter that one of the guys in the other group just shouted, "Oh, my God, there are other Black people here!"

I don't speak Thai, so I don't know if there's ever anything negative said. If there is, I'm certainly not treated that way. Here, the big thing seems to be being a foreigner. A word I've learned pretty quickly is *farang*, which basically means "foreigner." People will say it casually in a way that doesn't have any kind of judgment.

One thing that's jarring is that there are definitely perceptions about color. For example, at the market, it's a lot easier to find body and face lotions that have bleaching agents in them than not. The images on the packaging are a little odd, too. It won't have someone whose skin is getting clearer. It will have an animation that shows people who are very dark-skinned progressing into people who are very light-skinned. Issues of color here seem to be contained within the Thai people themselves and not projected onto me as a Black person.

## ASIA FACTOID

GUANGZHOU, CHINA, IS ASIA'S LARGEST AFRICAN COMMUNITY, OFTEN REFERRED TO AS "CHOCOLATE CITY." AS MANY AS 200,000 AFRICANS LIVE HERE.

LAST MARCH, ARIANA MIYAMOTO BECAME THE FIRST-EVER BIRACIAL MISS UNIVERSE JAPAN.

**ESSENCE: What's life like in Melbourne?**

**ABDULLAHI:** When I come home from seeing all the craziness from the stories I cover, it's quite refreshing to be in a place where things are calm and quiet. Melbourne is a very progressive city and very much aware of social issues, more than any other city in Australia. That's what I really respect about Melbourne and the people who live here. ▷



## EUROPE

**GABRIELLE SMITH, 30**

GRAPHIC DESIGNER AND FOUNDER, THENUBLK.COM,  
A WEB SITE THAT AMPLIFIES BLACK CREATIVES  
LONDON, ENGLAND

**ESSENCE:** What's it like living in a country where Blacks make up a such a small percentage of the population?

**GABRIELLE SMITH:** You get a sense of that number when you visit other places where the population is far higher. I remember returning home after spending a month in Grenada and New York City and experiencing culture shock. I had become accustomed to being around so many Black people. I imagined it must have been how my parents felt when they arrived in London from Grenada.

When it comes to identity, I've felt like somewhat of a cultural nomad. I was born in the U.K. and have a British passport, but people want to know where I'm really from. On the flip side, when I visit my parents' island, I'm "English girl" or "foreigner."

**ESSENCE:** Is there a similar #BlackLivesMatter movement happening in the U.K.?

**SMITH:** There have been a number of events held in solidarity with what's been going on in America. Acts of police brutality here don't get even half as much news coverage as they do in the U.S., so at times it can feel as if we've forgotten what's happening in the U.K.

I have a number of American friends who inquire whether the same thing is taking place in the U.K., and if I'm honest, apart from the London riots in 2011 [which were triggered by the killing of Mark Duggan by police] and perhaps the murder of Stephen Lawrence [which occurred in the nineties], I'm not aware of how what goes on in the U.K. transcends to the States or any other country.

**ESSENCE:** Have you ever experienced racism?

**SMITH:** The interesting thing about it here is that oftentimes racism can be so covert that you sometimes wonder if it actually happened or if you're overreacting. I've experienced countless microaggressions, especially at work.

Once a colleague was convinced that each time we spoke I came off aggressively, and even said she was afraid I was going to "do something" to her. This went on for about three weeks before I raised the issue with my boss. Needless to say, trying to explain what a microaggression is to someone who has never experienced one was a challenge.

### U.K. FACTOID

BLACK MIGRATION TO ENGLAND EXPLODED AFTER WORLD WAR II WITH THE ARRIVAL OF THE MV EMPIRE WINDRUSH AND SS AURIGA FROM THE CARIBBEAN.

3%  
OF PEOPLE IN  
THE U.K.  
ARE BLACK.



## SOUTH AMERICA

**CHARO MINA ROJAS, 53**

DIRECTOR, THE AFRO-COLOMBIAN WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS PROJECT, A GROUP THAT WORKS TO PREVENT ATROCITIES AGAINST AFRO-COLOMBIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS  
CALI, COLOMBIA



Rojas hard at work.

**ESSENCE:** What are some of the challenges Afro-Colombian women face?

**CHARO MINA ROJAS:** It is very difficult to be a Black woman in Colombia. The resilience and spirit of Black women is

constantly challenged. The government is one of the biggest perpetrators of economic violence because of the imposition of policies and large-scale development projects. Along with indigenous people, we are the poorest group in the country, but their population is significantly less than ours. Afro-Colombians make up 26 percent of 44 million Colombians, and the poverty rate is near 80 percent.

The armed conflict between the government and rebel groups that has impacted Colombia for a decade has also had a severe impact on Black women. When they try to step up to defend their rights or land, they face threats, abduction and stigmatization. There is a lot of kidnapping of Black women and it's not

# NORTH AMERICA



## EL JONES, THIRTIES

SPOKEN-WORD ACTIVIST  
AND TEACHER  
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA,  
CANADA

**ESSENCE:** You're the Poet Laureate of Halifax and also teach at Acadia University and the local prison. How do you balance it all?

**EL JONES:** Toni Cade Bambara said the job of an artist representing a marginalized community is to make revolution

irresistible. I think that's true—that's how I try to live my life. Poetry doesn't belong in a university. You can't just sit up in a university and ignore the people in the community and think that you're doing your job. For me it's all one thing. It's not really balancing, it's just doing. You just have to live it and try to live it with some integrity.

**ESSENCE:** What's it like being an outspoken woman of color in Halifax, a place with very few Black people?

**JONES:** It's hard. I've lost jobs, I've certainly lost opportunities, and people have threatened to kill me because I'm too political. Many have told me, "Don't say that until you get this job," but if you're not going to say it now, when are you going to say it? So yeah, it is a risk, but we have a duty to our ancestors and to the people who support us. They need our voices, and that has to be first.

well documented. In places like Buenaventura and Tumaco—areas where Black people mainly live—abduction of Black women is constant, but unfortunately it's underreported. People feel threatened and don't go to the authorities because in many cases the authorities have links to the perpetrators.

**ESSENCE:** Why do you stay, given the risks?

**ROJAS:** I lived in America for quite some time. I had a very quiet and comfortable life in the U.S., but I was constantly pulled back to my people. When a child is born in the Black community in Colombia, the umbilical cord is taken and buried in the ground, so you have a literal tie to the community. That pulls us back.

**ESSENCE:** Is there racism in Nova Scotia?

**JONES:** We're also known as the deep South of Canada and the Mississippi of the North because the racism here is so intense against Blacks. We have a long history of exclusions from this province in particular. It's difficult to get jobs. We have a really high dropout rate in the schools, only a tiny percentage of our teachers are Black. We have wrongful convictions. People don't associate that with Canada, people think Canada's the Promised Land, the Underground Railroad.

**ESSENCE:** Nova Scotia has such a rich history, but many people don't know about it. What do you wish people knew?

**JONES:** There's this thing in Canada where Blackness is seen as American, and they don't think of Blackness as being Canadian. But in Nova Scotia people know their identity; they know their names going back 300 years.

We have such powerful communities. Every place on earth has some Black people somewhere, but there's a difference between Black people just living in a place and places where Black people made communities. In Nova Scotia, there are communities, there are traditions, there is family. Actually having a community where you can say my great great great great-grandmother settled here is really powerful.

## CANADA FACTOID

IN 1783, APPROXIMATELY  
**3,000**

FREE BLACK BRITISH LOYALISTS MIGRATED TO NOVA SCOTIA FROM THE AMERICAN COLONIES.

TODAY,  
BLACKS MAKE  
UP ABOUT 2.3  
PERCENT, OR  
AROUND 21,000  
PEOPLE, IN  
NOVA SCOTIA.

**ESSENCE:** Given the nature of your work, how do you take care of yourself?

**ROJAS:** What happens to one affects everyone in some way. We protect ourselves and take care of one another. We do workshops and have meetings. There was a time in Buenaventura that

violence against women was so terrible that armed groups would control how women looked, dressed and moved. But we would pretend to celebrate birthdays or create an activity for children. This would help us be together. It would also set a precedent that said we are still in control. □

## COLOMBIA FACTOID

BLACK PEOPLE LIVE IN COLOMBIA,  
MAKING THEM THE SECOND LARGEST  
POPULATION OF AFRICAN DESCENT  
IN LATIN AMERICA.

COLOMBIA'S  
CONSTITUTION  
DID NOT  
RECOGNIZE THEIR  
MULTIETHNIC  
POPULATION  
UNTIL 1991.



**Britni Danielle** (@BritniDWrites) is a Los Angeles-based writer. She profiled Kelly Rowland for our April 2015 issue.



An anti-LGBT march takes place on the streets of Kampala, Uganda. Intolerance of homosexuality is high in many African nations.

# PRIDE & Prejudice

BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN IN AFRICA ARE RISKING THEIR LIVES DAILY TO PUSH THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES TOWARD TOLERANCE AND ACCEPTANCE OF LGBT CITIZENS. **LINDA VILLAROSA** REPORTS ON THE ANTIGAY AGENDA THAT PLAGUES MANY NATIONS ON THE CONTINENT, AND THE ACTIVISTS WHO ARE DETERMINED TO END IT

**W**hen Ugandan LGBT activist Clare Byarugaba woke up and turned on her phone on February 28, 2014, she was greeted by the same ominous message over and over: "Have you seen the newspaper?"

A few days before, the president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, had signed into law a bill that punished certain sexual acts between two people of the same gender with life in prison and threatened incarceration for those who provided services and support to the LGBT community. In response, a popular tabloid newspaper ran Byarugaba's name and photo on its front page that day with the headline "Top Ugandan Gays Speak Out: How We Became Homos."

"All I could think of was, *Oh, my God, my mom!*" recalls Byarugaba, whose voice catches as she describes her mother's response: She threatened to hand her daughter over to the police.

Byarugaba left town, fearing for her life after receiving death threats on her phone and via social media. She had seen what happened to out gays and lesbians in her country. In 2011 Uganda's most visible LGBT activist, David Kato, was bludgeoned to death with a hammer shortly after another tabloid splashed his photo on its front page under a banner that read, "Hang Them." As the co-coordinator of the Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law, an LGBT advocacy group, Byarugaba worried that something similar might happen to her. Speaking out and organizing against her government's anti-LGBT rhetoric had made her vulnerable.

"If you're in front of a major tabloid, that means you're a target," says Byarugaba, 28, who was raised in a small town in southwestern Uganda and now lives in Kampala, the capital and largest city. "But it was also the effect on my family and

the kind of shame that I knew it brought them in a country like Uganda that really disturbed me so much. I sent my whole family a message to say I was sorry, and then I went underground." After several days of hiding out in a quiet town on Lake Victoria under an assumed name without phone or Internet, she reemerged, stronger and more determined than ever.

Byarugaba is part of a new breed of proud and out African LGBT activists who are refusing to be silent in countries where being gay isn't just dangerous, it's deadly. LGBT marriage equality has gained strength in Western countries, where it is legal in 22 nations, including Brazil and, most recently, Mexico. In the U.S., 37 states plus the District of Columbia allow same-sex couples to marry. But as more and more people worldwide are embracing their LGBT brothers and sisters, a number of nations in Africa have hardened their anti-LGBT stances.

## ANTI-LGBT SENTIMENT

While some African countries, like South Africa, have seen pro-gay progress, same-sex sexual activity is illegal in 34 African nations, according to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association. Two countries on the continent, Mauritania and Sudan, and parts of Nigeria and Somalia, punish homosexuality with the death penalty. And all across the Motherland, citizens remain stubbornly intolerant of same-sex relationships. In Nigeria, 98 percent of the population believes homosexuality should not be accepted by society, according to the Pew Research Center. Intolerance is nearly as high in Senegal, Ghana, Uganda and Kenya. Even in South Africa, where antigay discrimination has been outlawed and same-sex marriage is legal, 61 percent of residents disapprove of same-sex relationships. ▶

Widespread condemnation from Western countries, including the U.S., has seemingly emboldened some African leaders. In May, Yahya Jammeh, president of The Gambia, threatened gay men living in his West African nation. "If you do it [in The Gambia], I will slit your throat," he said during a public speech. "If you are a man and want to marry another man in this country and we catch you, no one will ever set eyes on you again, and no White person can do anything about it."

In the wake of laws and inflammatory speech, LGBT men and women have lost jobs, and homes and have been whipped, stoned, beaten, raped and, like David Kato, murdered. Activists in Nigeria have reported a wave of antigay violence since last year, when that country instituted what is known as a "jail the gays" law, one of the world's most restrictive anti-LGBT rulings. It criminalizes public displays of affection between same-sex couples and jails groups and individuals who support LGBT rights.

Given the legal jurisdiction, Nigerian authorities often instigate violent crackdowns. Last October, police raided Ifeanyi Kelly Orazulike's thirty-fourth birthday party at the office of the International Center for Advocacy on the Rights to Health, the HIV/LGBT research and advocacy organization he runs in Abuja, the nation's capital. The police, brandishing guns, barged in, wrecked the office and rounded up Orazulike and his guests. Orazulike believes his neighbors tipped off law enforcement.

The outspoken activist fought back with a lawsuit against the police, which remains tied up in court. He continues to advocate for LGBT rights and health, but with some trepidation. "I was traumatized, degraded and humiliated," says Orazulike, who notes that his office was raided by armed officers again three months later, and that time some people were wounded. "We live in fear here. It is understood that if the police can do these kinds of things to you, it gives everyone else free rein."

Still, Orazulike has dug in his heels and vowed to stay in Nigeria and fight. "Several times I have thought about leaving because I feel so tired, confused, depressed and frustrated," says Orazulike, the father of two children. "But there is so much to be done here. When I want to walk away, I think about the future and have hope."

## ESCAPING INTOLERANCE

It's hard to say how many, but growing numbers of African LGBT people have fled their homeland, seeking asylum in safe havens in other parts of the world. The United Nations



## ANTI-LGBT PROTESTS

estimates that more than 40 countries now recognize LGBT persecution as a valid reason for accepting refugees. "There is something of an exodus going on among LGBT Africans who are finding it too difficult to survive in their countries and are heading for the exit door," explains Charles Radcliffe, who heads the global issues section at the U.N. human rights office in New York City. "Our goal is to have them stay in their countries and help make their lives better. But there has to be a last resort when people's lives are at risk and they need a safe passage."

Micheal Ighodaro aches for Nigeria, where he says his heart is. But for now, the LGBT asylum seeker lives in an apartment in the Bronx. An HIV/AIDS educator, Ighodaro attended the International HIV/AIDS conference in Washington, D.C., in 2012, and a story about the event that referenced him as a gay man appeared online. When he returned home to Abuja, his apartment had been set on fire. A few days later, several men attacked him and he suffered broken ribs and a shattered hand. "I was almost

killed that night," says Ighodaro, 29, who works as a program and policy assistant for AVAC (formerly known as AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition), an HIV prevention organization in Harlem. "Then I started receiving very scary, serious threats. Even my own family threatened to have me killed."

Longtime Ugandan activist and transgender man Victor Mukasa left his country for the United States in 2012 after repeated death threats to himself, his family and friends. "They told me, 'We will rape your children in your presence and then kill them,'" says Mukasa, 40, a father of two. "That was when I made the decision to leave."

Originally known as Juliet, Mukasa describes his early years in Uganda as "hell itself." After he came out as a lesbian at a young age, his family threw him out. Over the years, he has been insulted, fired and beaten. In the early 2000's, after hearing about a young Ugandan lesbian who killed herself after she was humiliated for writing a love letter to another girl, Mukasa followed his passion to become an LGBT activist. "I said enough is enough and went on radio and TV and was quoted in newspapers and magazines," he says. "I began to speak out openly against the injustices and advocated for an end to them."

Acknowledging that he had always felt more male than female, he began calling himself Victor in 2004. The following year, government officials raided his home, illegally searching and confiscating documents. Enraged, he sued the Ugandan

## MORE THAN 40 COUNTRIES RECOGNIZE LGBT PERSECUTION AS A VALID REASON FOR ACCEPTING REFUGEES.

## NIGERIAN ACTIVISTS REPORTED A WAVE OF ANTIGAY VIOLENCE SINCE THE "JAIL THE GAYS" LAW WAS INSTITUTED.

attorney general for police harassment and won. After the lawsuit, however, Mukasa's life became unbearable. "It went to a different level," he says. "Now my direct enemy and threat was the state."

After years of hiding in fear, he finally left Uganda and now runs the Kuchu Diaspora Alliance, a Baltimore-based nonprofit that works with African LGBT refugees and asylum seekers worldwide. The organization strives to address the health, safety and housing needs of the hundreds of displaced Ugandan LGBT citizens, many of whom have fled to nearby Kenya and live in camps, waiting for resettlement. They face unique risks, compared with other refugees, including violence. "Many don't have the same kinds of support as other refugees because they have been rejected by their families and communities," says Radcliffe of the U.N. "They really are alone in the world. Asylum is an absolute last option."

Even those who land in the States say life can feel difficult and lonely. "I left everything, including my family, behind," says Mukasa. "I love my country. I didn't want to leave the land where my parents are buried. I would prefer to be home working on our struggles within the movement I helped build."

### SIGNS OF HOPE

A group called The Fellowship Global, spearheaded by an African-American minister from Oakland, is striking back to combat negative rhetoric about LGBT men and women in Africa. Some of the strongest anti-LGBT feelings on the continent have been spurred by conservative evangelical Christians, mainly White, who visit African countries and have been known to stir up anti-LGBT feelings. "People of African descent are a spiritual people, and they respond to messages about God," says Bishop Yvette Flunder, the organization's founder. "But much of what folks are hearing about LGBT people comes from White conservatives. One way Africa was colonized the first time was in the name of Jesus."

Flunder and other Black ministers have traveled to Uganda, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya and other countries to meet with clergy, government officials and organizations. Their goal: to encourage a social justice movement in Africa that includes the LGBT community and to minister to gay and lesbian individuals on the ground, many of whom are deeply spiritual and confused by the hate speech from Christian clergy who visit from the

U.S. In response to an appeal from Kenyan gays and lesbians, Bishop Flunder and the executive director of The Fellowship Global, Bishop Joseph Tolton, helped establish the Cosmopolitan Affirming Church for LGBT worshippers in Nairobi last year. "It's incredibly important that someone says, 'I'm Black like you, I am Christian like you and I have a theology to share with you that fully affirms who you are,'" says Flunder, a same-gender-loving woman and senior pastor of the City of Refuge United Church of Christ in Oakland. "That's a breath of fresh air."

Flunder and Tolton hope to press the Congressional Black Caucus to hold a hearing on the exportation of homophobia to Africa by conservative Christians. They stress the importance of connecting LGBT rights to the larger struggle for social justice and human rights. Tolton urges churches and community organizations to remember that "Black LGBT lives matter, too."

Experts believe that we must approach the problems of Africa with care and caution, since even well-meaning support can seem like the brand of Western imperialism that has contributed to strife and chaos throughout the continent. Still, progressive African-Americans have a major role to play. "By learning about this issue and sharing information, African-Americans stand in solidarity with those

abroad," says Radcliffe. "Showing LGBT people in Africa that you care about their struggles can make an important difference." Adds Orazulike of Nigeria: "Having your support means a lot."

Understanding that Africans have deep-rooted cultural and familial connections, Clare Byarugaba is creating a Kampala chapter of PFLAG, (formerly known as Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), a global organization that supports relatives and allies of LGBT persons. She hopes it will encourage people like her own mother to open their hearts and minds to LGBT Ugandans. "I'm passionate about convening mothers to share the kinds of stories about their LGBT children that few people hear in our country," she says. "I feel like if there's that alternative family voice then people won't look at you as an LGBT person; they'll see you as someone's child."

To get involved, learn more and donate to LGBT rights organizations in Africa, visit [kuchudiasporaalliance.org](http://kuchudiasporaalliance.org), [youcaring.com](http://youcaring.com) (search "Clare Byarugaba") and [thefellowshipglobal.org](http://thefellowshipglobal.org). □

**Linda Villarosa** runs the journalism program at the City College of New York in Harlem. She is a former executive editor of *ESSENCE* and health editor of *The New York Times*.



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# WILL TRAVEL FOR LOVE

While achieving a goal to #SeeSomeWorld, more Black women are swimming in an international dating pool to find their partners

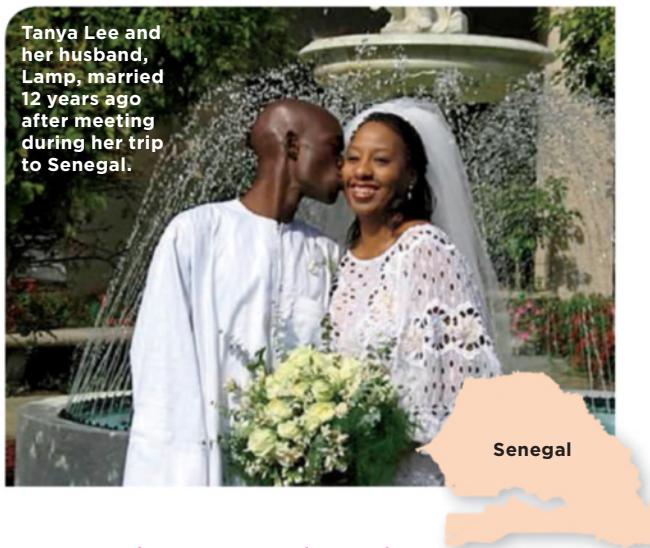
BY PENNY WRENN

**R**aise your hand if you're tired of hearing "There are no good men out there."

Do we really believe there are no quality guys left on the planet? It's not a small world after all, with a population of more than 7 billion. If you're a sister riding the "no good men" train and haven't ventured beyond the 100-mile Tinder radius, consider taking a cue from Black women who have crisscrossed continents and discovered love.

Phoenix-based fortysomething Tanya M. Lee says a man wasn't on her list of things to bring back from Senegal on a visit with her mother in 2002. So Lee was surprised when she met Lamp, a local videographer who assisted when her mom fell ill on the trip. "Something very special was sparked through a crisis. It was ten days of getting to know someone," says Lee.

# SEX & LOVE



## Importing a Husband

After nearly two weeks working with Senegalese doctors and the U.S. embassy, Lee and her mother finally returned stateside. Her mom was soon diagnosed with a terminal illness, and sadly she died a few months later. While Lee mourned, she remained in close contact with Lamp. Just six months after her inaugural trek to Senegal, she was boarding a plane to see him again. Lee asked a girlfriend to tag along for moral support and to give feedback on this brother, whom she'd already begun to think of as her boyfriend.

Lee believed Lamp was genuine, but she couldn't help but consider the cautionary tales she had heard about foreigners looking for American women to marry for a U.S. green card. "The true test of any marriage is time," she says. Lee decided the relationship with Lamp was worth pursuing. She was wise to follow her heart and instincts: This year, the couple, who have a 9-year-old daughter, celebrated their twelfth anniversary.

When it was time for her husband to move to the States, Lee had difficulty with immigration procedures. The experience inspired her transition from being a corporate attorney for Procter & Gamble to providing legal counsel to couples and families dealing with immigration issues. "The only way to sponsor a future spouse is through a fiancé visa," she says. But "quick" can mean nine months to a year. The process includes establishing your U.S. citizenship, showing you and your betrothed have met in person within two years and documenting income to prove your partner won't need public assistance. Once the visa is approved, there's a mad dash for the future spouse to move and marry. A couple have to wed in 90 days with the visa and then can apply for a green card.

Alternatively, some African-American women choose to leave the U.S. for good. Take Johari Murray, 39. She grew up in New York and was a 19-year-old student studying abroad in Salamanca, Spain, when she met Agustín at a party in 1996. "We talked until the sun came up," she says—no easy feat considering her broken Spanish. Upon returning home, Murray

announced to her mother, "I met the man I'm going to marry." Nearly a decade later, she did.

The couple now live in Cáceres, Spain, with their son and daughter. Murray works as an educational entrepreneur, and has permanent resident status in Spain while maintaining her U.S. citizenship. She and her husband have journeyed back and forth between Spain and the U.S. for their jobs.

## Improving the Odds

Sometimes being the most desired woman in the room can happen in the few hours it takes to travel somewhere new. Chelsea Como hopped a plane to Italy from her hometown of Miami in 2009. Her sister had died in a tragic car accident a few years before, prompting Como to start *really* living life.

On blackgirltravel.com, Como purchased a slot on a group tour to Italy with 59 other Black women. The trip reignited her self-confidence, something she didn't realize had been missing. "I felt invincible," says twenty-something Como. "I'd walk down the street and men would just start clapping." Buoyed by the self-esteem boost from her first trip, Como sojourned in Italy every year that followed. In 2012 she relocated there for good.

The spontaneous applause Como experienced is the kind of respectful yet enthusiastic appreciation of Black women that Fleacé Weaver, travel agent and founder of BlackGirlTravel, loves to see. "Too many Black women feel as if they're on the bottom rung of the dating ladder," Weaver says. "It's my mission to get us to not just fish in the same shallow pond."

—FLEACÉ WEAVER

Her goal is awesome travel for Black women. Sparks flying between vacationers and hand-some local men is icing on an international cake.

Before moving to Rome, Como had dated only one or two guys in the U.S.—and never dated outside of her race. She's now planning to move in with her Italian boyfriend of two years.

## Going Global From Home

For all their positive results, trips like Weaver's don't come cheap. They can average \$2,300 to \$3,500. If you can't afford the splurge right now, try an international dating site like afroromance.com or tourbar.com, which connects prospective travelers. The free dating app Wamba boasts more than 31 million users in 15 countries.

Whatever your strategy, here's the happily-ever-after upshot: If you've been unsuccessful at finding love in the home of the brave, there's a new frontier that awaits—and it's right across the Atlantic.





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Aphrochic creators Jeanine Hays and Bryan Mason designed this vibe wall paper, inspired by an African Chevron



# SEE THE WORLD AT HOME

You've dreamed about watching the sun set in Senegal or peonies bloom in Paris. Now it's time for your personal space to reflect your wanderlust

BY TANYA CHRISTIAN

Enjoying the energy of your favorite exotic locale in the comfort of your home is a real treat. "Once you get past what to sit on and where to store things, it's your personality that makes a place yours," says Elaine Griffin, a New York City-based interior designer. When shopping for decorative items during an excursion, consider the specialties and expertise of the destination. "When you have an idea of what the area you are going to is known for, you'll know what to look for," Griffin says. "This also helps you to stay focused on the things you need and what things can be purchased domestically at flea markets or home stores," she adds. "Be sure to keep your personal design aesthetic in mind when traveling. Regardless of the region you visit, select pieces that speak to it." If you're more French boudoir than Japanese Zen garden, for example, opt for tufted furniture and ornate mirrors over sharp edges and straight lines.

## Get inspired by color and don't be afraid to go bold.

Is your favorite hue Thailand blue? Let the rich textures of faraway lands be your guide when deciding on a wall shade or looking for a way to spruce up an otherwise tame space. "A trip to Nepal can inspire a vibrant color combination featuring rich hues such as curry, teal, saffron, sable and even fuchsia," says Erika Hollinshead Ward, owner and principal designer of an interior design firm in Atlanta. "Drape a handmade tapestry across the back of a sofa to give your neutral upholstery some much-needed impact."

## Focus on small, decorative accessories.

Trinkets can be a domestic devil when overdone, but a carefully curated side table with tchotchkes from around the world can make a great conversation center. Ward suggests you "group small sculptures and display them as a collection, or divide them up to serve an alternative purpose such as a bookend or paperweight." Jeanine Hays, editor-in-chief of *aphrochic.com* and coauthor of *Remix: Decorating With Culture, Objects, and Soul*, adds that when traveling abroad, "select textiles, which are the best example of a great piece you can bring back to your home with minimum fuss."

## Turn vacation photos and market finds into a global gallery wall.

Canvas prints and original photography are cool additions to any wanderer's space. Fabrics and masks can be placed in shadow boxes or frames to add contrast and dimension to a wall of vacation pictures. If the pieces don't exactly mesh, print photos in black and white. Hays says that when displayed, "they promise all the depth and soulfulness that comes from a monochrome image."

## Put away your passport and grab a shopping cart.

You can achieve an international atmosphere without leaving home—and sans the price tag for globe-trotting. Search for handcrafted and one-of-a-kind items on eBay, projectbly.com or from Etsy shops like Wanderloot, Urban Accent Home, Unique African Arts and Hammer & Hand. "Rugs from Damascus, wood sculptures from Morocco and tchotchkes from a souk in Turkey are all a click away," Griffin says. In addition, stores such as Pier 1, Anthropologie and HomeGoods send buyers abroad for appealing pieces. She also cautions that whatever you add to your space, "make sure it makes sense. Make sure you love it, and make sure it speaks to your heart."



Design pro Elaine Griffin (left) used Asian textiles, Parisian art and Moroccan ceramics to her bedroom.



For interior designer Erika Hollinshead Ward (right), a hand-embroidered pillow from South Africa was just the ethnic touch her home needed.

**“Rugs from Damascus, Moroccan sculptures and tchotchkes from Turkey are a click away.”**

—ELAINE GRIFFIN



Global accents reflect an appreciation for art and culture, say home decor experts Jeanine Hays and her husband, Bryan Mason (far left).

GRiffin and interior, courtesy of ELAINE GRIFFIN, HOLLINSHHEAD WARD, AHMAD BARBER, INTERIOR, ERIKA WARD, INTERIORS HAYS AND MASON, PATRICK CLINE, COURTESY OF REMIX: DECORATING WITH CULTURE, OBJECTS AND SOUL (POTTER STYLE, INTERIOR, JESS SSAC)

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FROM JOSEPHINE BAKER TO NINA SIMONE, BLACK WOMEN HAVE BEEN LEAVING THE U.S. TO PURSUE UNMATCHABLE OPPORTUNITIES OVERSEAS. HERE, THREE WOMEN SHARE THEIR JOURNEY OF LIVING NEW LIVES IN FOREIGN LANDS  
AS TOLD TO CHRISTEN A. JOHNSON

## Tamara Thomas Clarke, 35

### Atlanta to Abu Dhabi

In December 2012 I arrived in my new home, Abu Dhabi, with my 8-month-old son and four pieces of luggage. I couldn't believe I had just traveled to live somewhere I had never even visited. My husband, Walter, had secured a job teaching high school English abroad, a long-standing career goal for him. I was ready for the challenge and had an online accessories business, which was easy to maintain anywhere. Walter had moved in October to get acclimated. As Christmas approached, it was time for us to follow him.

Before relocating, I joined Facebook groups in which people who live overseas share information. Our parents knew this change could enrich our lives, but weren't so thrilled about us taking their grandson halfway around the world. The Middle East is often linked with religious fervor, so our decision promised a learning experience about other aspects of the region.

My first day here was surreal. We bought household basics and looked for a crib. I was timid and let my husband do all the talking. In the beginning, I felt as if everyone was watching me. One day my husband said, "They may be staring because there aren't many people here who look like you." I softened after that. One day I was shopping and a sales

**“As a mother of two Black boys, I want to return to a stronger, greater America.”**

—TAMARA THOMAS CLARKE

associate asked, "May I touch your hair?" Tickled, I said, "Yes," giving her full access to my tresses. I turned around to find four Filipino associates smiling. They had many questions, so I ended up giving a ten-minute tutorial on locs. It was an exchange I will always remember.

In November 2014 we welcomed our younger son. Here, my prenatal health care mirrored what I had received in America with my first son, and some hospitals use American or British standards of care. My doctor was well trained and highly

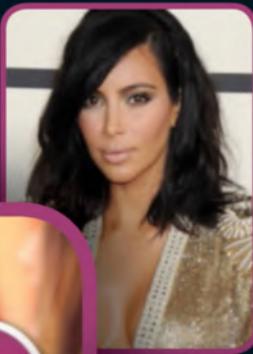
recommended. It's awesome raising my children in a different land, because it breeds cultural understanding

and open-mindedness. I discontinued my e-commerce business and am now a stay-at-home mom, tech writer and theglobalgazette.com blogger.

The UAE is a Muslim country, but it practices religious tolerance. I'm Christian, so I'm not required to cover my head. There are formal places, like the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, that provide hooded abayas for ladies to wear when visiting. We attend a local church where our younger son was dedicated.

Returning to the States is a goal for our future, but we don't have a set date. As a mother of two Black boys, I want to return to a stronger, greater America. I'm hopeful that the citizens will continue working toward justice for all. ▶

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GERMANY

**Blake and Arianna, 2, go for a stroll in their Berlin *kiez*, which means "neighborhood" in German.**

## Nicole Blake, 36

Newark, New Jersey, to London to Berlin

A Newark native, I didn't really appreciate the head nod or smile Black people give each other in passing until I moved abroad, because I would have been nodding all the time! Being a person of color in Europe is totally different. Once I was walking down the street in Berlin with some relatives who were visiting. We heard someone yell, "Hello!" It was a Black woman, and she was so excited to see other people of color. She crossed the street to greet us. My family still jokes about this.

In 2006 I was working as a government contractor in Washington, D.C., when I was offered a six-month temporary assignment in London. I took the opportunity and it extended to three years. Once the contract was up, I wasn't ready to leave Europe. I secured a position in Germany's private sector and moved to Berlin in 2009. At that point, my knowledge was limited to the Berlin Wall, Oktoberfest and the Holocaust.

When I announced my decision to stay in Europe, I'm sure my mom cried, just not in front of me. I miss my family and support system, but not enough to move back to the U.S.

While in London, I met and fell in love with a Danish man, the father of my 2-year-old daughter, Arianna. We were together on and off for five years. I was eight weeks pregnant when he decided our relationship wasn't working out. Despite his decision not to be in our lives, his family is supportive and his mother visits often. For a single mother, I find that Berlin is a parent's paradise: After giving birth, I was able to take 14 months of paid parental leave. Also, the government subsidizes my daughter's day care—so I pay less than \$80 a month—and gives every parent "child's money," about \$200 every month, until the child is 25 and meets certain requirements. I don't know what it's like to raise kids in the U.S., but my friends say I got the better deal.

However, I do worry about the lack of visibility of people of color. There are days when I am the only Black person my daughter sees. I refuse to let her ignore her Blackness, so I connect with families of diverse backgrounds. She has friends who

look like her and friends with moms who look like me.

I think it's important for Black Americans to experience the rest of the world. There are parts where our skin color is not a liability and where police are not above reproach. Seeing yourself beyond the context of America is eye-opening and I have changed so much. I hope to apply for permanent residency.

Living, thriving and raising my daughter in Berlin have taught me I can do anything. I didn't know anyone and couldn't speak the language early on, yet I am still here.

## Michelle McKinney Hammond, 57

Chicago to Accra

July 1, 2011, the day I moved to Ghana, is forever etched in my memory. My Ghanaian father had passed away the year before. He left me a security company and a financial business in the capital city of Accra. At the time I was a best-selling author and speaker in America, but I had lost everything in the recession. I was traveling back and forth, trying to revive my own businesses as well as my father's. I had only exhaustion to show for it. Finally, in a prayerful heap, I asked God what I was supposed to do. His message was clear to me: "Move to Ghana." I didn't have all the details, but I was ready for the leap of faith.

My friends were sad to be losing the host of our get-togethers. The hardest part was all the packing. It was better for me to take my things than to furnish a house there. I remember the numbness settling over me as the shipping company removed all my worldly possessions. That's when it dawned on me that I was about to embark on a whole new adventure—getting my father's companies back on track, writing my books and traveling for speaking engagements. I realized I was here to stay when I learned about maintaining a home the Ghanaian way. All the things I took for granted in the States, like running water and electricity, took on a different meaning. I often had to go on treasure hunts for the simple things. When I visit America, I head to Costco and Sam's Club to stock up on paper towels, toilet tissue, cleaning materials, my favorite salad dressing and toiletries. Some items are available here, but the markup is so high that it's cheaper to ship them to myself.

I am deeply involved in church as well as in my businesses. My work is my play. I keep my circle small and miss my friends back home. When I visit, I send a calendar so everyone can pick a time to hang out.

In Ghana I'm making a difference in people's lives. American culture is in your face, while the culture here is much more subtle. Americans become jaded quickly, but Ghanaians are more open to new things. Being here is rewarding. I feel bad for missing my nieces' and nephews' milestones, but unless God wants me to return I will remain where I am.



GHANA

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Being Black and proud begins with lessons learned at home.



# Say It Loud

DISCOVER HOW RACIAL PRIDE CAN HELP YOUR CHILDREN SUCCEED **BY YLONDA GAULT CAVINESS**

**A**long with reinforcing the traditional values and beliefs that are meaningful to your family, there is an important ideal that Black parents can ill-afford to overlook: racial pride. The recent #BlackLivesMatter movement sparked a conversation with our kids about identity awareness, for the streets as well as the classroom.

Cultural knowledge also leads to better grades. "My research shows African-American adolescents with an informed racial identity have more academic success," says James P. Huguley, research associate at the University of Pittsburgh Center on Race and Social Problems. His study found that a cultural foundation gives our kids greater confidence and can protect them from "racial slights." New York City mom of three Kyissa Jemine, 37, is preparing her eldest, Tabitha, 6, for life as a Black woman. From watching the Black Girls Rock! Awards to going to a Black pediatrician, "we look for her to see our people are strong and accomplished," says Jemine. Our children need consistent affirming messaging. Here's how to help your kids build racial confidence.

**TEACH SELF-LOVE.** Lisa Shaw, 40, a

mother of two in Alpharetta, GA, makes sure her daughters appreciate their kinky hair and African-American features. She and her husband, Derick, have a family phrase to empower Nairobi, 9, and Sarah, 7: "Free to be me." With girls it's especially critical to walk the walk, says Marilyn B. Benoit, M.D., a child and adolescent psychiatrist in Washington, D.C. She suggests parents highlight faces like Lupita Nyong'o's and Janelle Monáe's—"a diversity of beauty images, not just Beyoncé." For credibility, moms must celebrate their own beauty and resist pressure to focus on European beauty standards.

**TALK UP NEWS AND CURRENT EVENTS.** Don't pretend violence against Blacks isn't happening. The headlines are inescapable. An age-appropriate conversation is key. Research indicates kids can often internalize racial prejudice. Young children, says Benoit, are concrete thinkers, so keep responses simple. For example, "The protesters are upset because a Black man was treated unfairly." The older ones can process the historical perspective, so share facts about slavery or personal stories of bias. But don't do all the talking. Let them share their feelings.

**ACCENT THE POSITIVE.** When kids know what Black people have overcome, they are better prepared—emboldened, even—to deal with adversity. So while any conversation about the Civil Rights Movement has to include the atrocities that resistance leaders faced, put emphasis on the victorious result. "This information should encourage our kids—not victimize them," says Huguley. There is a resurgent understanding on how racism can traumatize us into adulthood. "Parents should look at these conversations with their children as a form of immunization," Benoit says. "Our discussions won't prevent discrimination but can protect them from the damages." The Shaws share family milestones such as college graduations, career advancements and home purchases.

**MAKE IT A LIFESTYLE.** Huguley says some Black parents may forget that, despite progress, society is not race-blind. "Family discussions about race and culture shouldn't be part of a Big Talk," he says. "It needs to flow naturally all the time." If your daughter is enjoying her favorite hip-hop track, use the opportunity to talk about how the genre started, then segue into other ways Blacks have shaped American culture. Younger children might enjoy a game like the Myles & Ayesha: Black Inventors Match Game app, which you can play as a family. Encourage your kids with books about African-American history. Tabitha's favorites include *Chocolate Me* and *Bessie Smith and the Night Riders*. "We like to make learning fun," Jemine says.

**MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE.** Older children and teens are developmentally ready to receive frank cultural messaging, says Huguley. "Adolescents should be taught how to behave if they encounter police," he says. "When it's the continuation of the cultural lessons they've been hearing, this talk has context." And help them channel their feelings and be empowered to effect change. Youth Speaks offers national opportunities for poetry slamming and performing, and The Freechild Project has tips and options for teen activists.

**Ylonda Gault Caviness** is author of *Child, Please: How Mama's Old-School Lessons Helped Me Check Myself Before I Wrecked Myself* (Tarcher).

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**Page 17: Maki Oh** top, \$825, [oxosi.com](http://oxosi.com). **One X Oneteaspoon** skirt, \$130, [rocketiquette.com](http://rocketiquette.com). **Ruthie Davis** shoes, \$798, [ruthiedavis.com](http://ruthiedavis.com).

**Page 18: Mackage** scarf, \$350, [mackage.com](http://mackage.com). **McGuire** vest, \$228, Saks Fifth Avenue. **Day Birger et Mikkelsen** pants, \$530, [day.dk](http://day.dk). **MeharyJewel** ring, \$195, [meharyjewel.com](http://meharyjewel.com) for info.

**Cocoa Jewelry** bracelet, \$58, [cocoajewelry.com](http://cocoajewelry.com). **Charlotte Olympia** shoes, \$795, [charlotteolympia.com](http://charlotteolympia.com). Vest, stylist's own.

**Page 20: Top left: Camilla and Marc** **Luster** top, \$999, [camillaandmarc.com](http://camillaandmarc.com)

**R13** jeans, \$595, [shopbop.com](http://shopbop.com). **Lena Bernard** earrings, \$40, [lenabernard.com](http://lenabernard.com). **Ruthie Davis** shoes, \$798, [ruthiedavis.com](http://ruthiedavis.com). Bottom right:

**Smythe** blazer, \$595, [nordstrom.com](http://nordstrom.com). **Teatum Jones** top, \$555, [teatumjones.com](http://teatumjones.com). **Basic Terrain** pants, \$162, [basicterrain.com](http://basicterrain.com). **Sigerson Morrison** shoes, \$395, [sigersonmorrison.com](http://sigersonmorrison.com).

### SPIRITED AWAY

**Page 74-75: alice + olivia by Stacey**

**Bendet** culottes, \$550, [aliceandolivia.com](http://aliceandolivia.com). **Alexis Bittar** cuff, \$395, [Alexis Bittar boutiques](http://alexisbittar.com). **Amanda Marmer** diamond nail ring, \$880, [amandamarmer.com](http://amandamarmer.com). Feathers, stylist's own. Hat, subject's own.

**Page 76-77: Desigual** cardigan, \$139, [desigual.com](http://desigual.com). Left hand: **Dannijo** cuff, \$316, [dannijo.com](http://dannijo.com). Right hand:

**Stella & Dot** necklace, \$138, [stelladot.com](http://stelladot.com). **Holst + Lee** bracelets, \$150 and \$165, [holstandlee.com](http://holstandlee.com). **Iradj Moini** snake wrap bracelet, \$1,090, Bergdorf Goodman. Rings, subject's own.

**Page 78: Rebecca Minkoff** poncho, \$495, [rebeccaminkoff.com](http://rebeccaminkoff.com). **Kut from the Kloth** jumpsuit (underneath), \$128, [kutfromthekloth.com](http://kutfromthekloth.com). **Mordekai by Ken Borochov** headpiece, \$1,900, [mordekai.com](http://mordekai.com).

**Page 80: Cynthia Rowley** dress, \$495,

[cynthiarowley.com](http://cynthiarowley.com). **Daphna Simon** camel ring, \$170, [daphnasimon.com](http://daphnasimon.com). Necklace, subject's own.

**Page 81: Elouinia Exantus** crown, \$1,000, similar pieces at [eloexa.com](http://eloexa.com). **Amanda Marmer** diamond nail ring, \$880, [amandamarmer.com](http://amandamarmer.com).

### INTO AFRICA

**Page 82-83: Maki Oh** dress, \$1,700, [oxosi.com](http://oxosi.com). **Cocoa Jewelry** necklaces, \$95 and \$85, [cocoajewelry.com](http://cocoajewelry.com).

**Emu Australia** boots, \$200, [emuaustralia.com](http://emuaustralia.com).

**Page 84: Sass & Bide** dress, \$2,500, [sassandbide.com](http://sassandbide.com). **Melinda Maria** ring, \$98, [melindamaria.com](http://melindamaria.com).

**Rebecca Minkoff** boots, \$495, [rebeccaminkoff.com](http://rebeccaminkoff.com).

**Page 85: Christos Costarellos** dress, \$1,550, Mark Ingram Atelier, NYC, 212-319-6778. **Mordekai by Ken**

**Borochov** Mohawk headpiece, available by special order, [mordekai.com](http://mordekai.com).

**MeharyJewel** tassel choker, \$350, and cuff, \$425, [meharyjewel.com](http://meharyjewel.com) for info.

**Ben-Amun by Isaac Manevitz** bracelet, \$470, [ben-amun.com](http://ben-amun.com). **Emu Australia** boots, \$200, [emuaustralia.com](http://emuaustralia.com).

**Page 86: Tracy Reese** top coat, \$598, and fur-hemmed shell, \$548, [tracyreese.com](http://tracyreese.com). **Camilla** shorts, \$399, Blue & Cream, East Hampton, NY, 631-329-1392. **Cocoa Jewelry** necklace, \$50, [cocoajewelry.com](http://cocoajewelry.com).

**MeharyJewel** pendulum necklace, \$230, [meharyjewel.com](http://meharyjewel.com) for info.

**Rebecca Minkoff** boots, \$495, [rebeccaminkoff.com](http://rebeccaminkoff.com).

**Page 87: VMT** vest, \$2100, [vmt-losangeles.com](http://vmt-losangeles.com). **Va Bien** bustier, \$225, [vabienusa.com](http://vabienusa.com). **Milly** pants, \$495, [milly.com](http://milly.com) for similar styles. **Mordekai by Ken Borochov** ring, \$195, [mordekai.com](http://mordekai.com). **Blaine Bowen** rings, \$57-\$62, [blainebowen.com](http://blainebowen.com). **Sophia Webster** sandals, \$1,095, [sophiawebster.com](http://sophiawebster.com).

**Page 88: Dsquared2** body stocking, \$450, [dsquared2.com](http://dsquared2.com). **Sass & Bide** harness, \$990, [sassandbide.com/us](http://sassandbide.com/us). **Blaine Bowen** rings, \$57-\$62, [blainebowen.com](http://blainebowen.com). **Sorel** boots, \$225, [sorel.com](http://sorel.com).

**Page 89: Amelia Toro** vest and cropped pants, \$1,250 and \$1,100, [Amelia Toro](http://AmeliaToro.com), NYC, 212-337-8567.

**Etnia Barcelona** sunglasses, \$192, [etniabarcelona.com](http://etniabarcelona.com). **Laruicci** body chain, \$375, [laruicci.com](http://laruicci.com). **Melinda Maria** ring, \$98, [melindamaria.com](http://melindamaria.com). **Sophia Webster** sandals, \$995, [neimanmarcus.com](http://neimanmarcus.com). □



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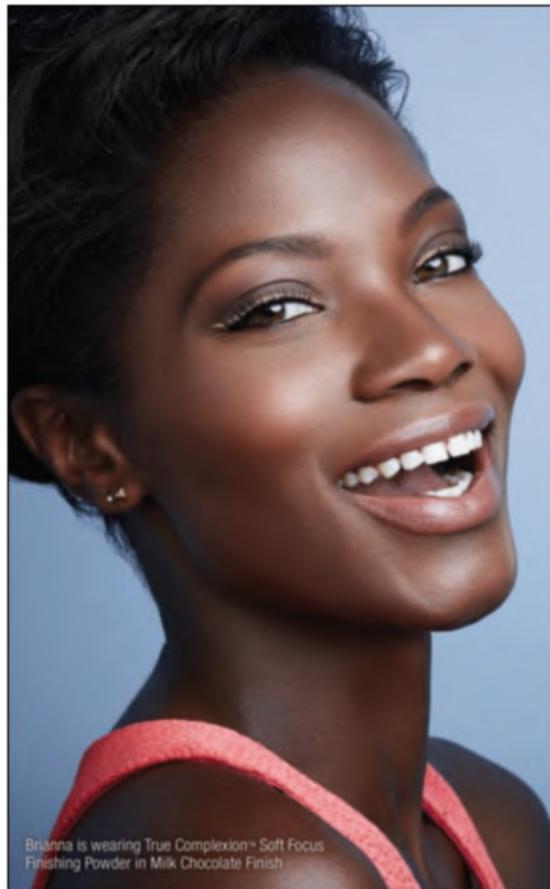
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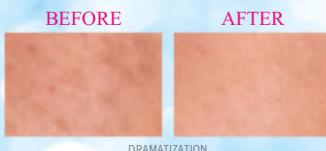
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## HOROSCOPE



## Leo July 23 to August 22

**OVERVIEW** You're edgy, sassy, self-assured and determined to get what you want, which can seem off-putting to some and ballsy to others. When it comes to hard work you're all in, performing your duties in stilettos, a pricey outfit and accessories to match. Nobody wants to get on your bad side because when you roar it's never pretty. A fire sign, you're volatile, red-hot and uncontrollable. You're generally compatible with Sagittarius, Gemini, Libra and Aries. But when you and your opposite, Aquarius, connect, the intensity of the bedroom play can't offset the lack of a meeting of the minds. **THE YEAR AHEAD** Your quest for romance, marriage or a long-held dream requires that you allow your instincts, not your head, to guide you. **THIS MONTH** **LOVE:** The "great reveal" satisfies, titillates and touches your heart. **WORK:** Volunteer efforts promote teamwork and keep haters in check. **MONEY:** Avoid overloading credit cards. **INSPIRATION:** When your innate generosity is compared with those with motives, there's no contest.

## Virgo

### ► August 23 to September 22

**LOVE:** Lackluster relationships get on your nerves. Plan a surprise to shake things up. **WORK:** Relocation is doable if there's a support system in place. **MONEY:** Discuss projects thoroughly before investing. **INSPIRATION:** Believing in your abilities is one baby step to a giant leap of faith.

## Libra

### ► September 23 to October 22

**LOVE:** Enjoy your It girl status, but don't get lost in the hype. **WORK:** Your integrity and loyalty will win out over secrets and lies. **MONEY:** If a trip

is offered, make sure expenses are paid and emergency cash is available.

**INSPIRATION:** Acknowledging your fears in uncharted territory gives you more control and firms your resolve.

## Scorpio

### ► October 23 to November 21

**LOVE:** Your sex drive can blind you to what lies beneath the surface. Trust your gut. **WORK:** Your record speaks volumes, so stand your ground. **MONEY:** Don't let the need for a loan stop you from reading the fine print. **INSPIRATION:** Self-satisfaction is the sweet spot between being content where you are and striving for more.

## Sagittarius

### ► November 22 to December 21

**LOVE:** Your toe-to-toe encounter intrigues. Couples, recapture the joy. **WORK:** Keep your nose to the grindstone and you'll be rewarded. **MONEY:** Be prudent. You don't have the dollars to do it all. **INSPIRATION:** Claim your power without compromising your principles.

## Capricorn

### ► December 22 to January 19

**LOVE:** Set aside your vulnerability and insist on consideration. **WORK:** Your boldness in finishing a project annoys detractors, but bosses take notice. **MONEY:** The state of the family coffers has you on the hot seat. But hold steady. **INSPIRATION:** Reaching the mountaintop will take planning and understanding the journey.

## Aquarius

### ► January 20 to February 18

**LOVE:** Suitors of many stripes have you in a tailspin. Enjoy the ride. Couples, close the gap. **WORK:** Your unpredictable approach calls for a big move. **MONEY:** Honesty about your net worth is not necessarily the best policy now. **INSPIRATION:** Appreciate what you do have and not what others deem important.

## Pisces

### ► February 19 to March 20

**LOVE:** Your busy social calendar means the choice is yours. **WORK:** Concentrate on productivity instead of bragging rights. **MONEY:** Consider retraining or getting an advanced degree even though funds may be limited. **INSPIRATION:** The flow of positive energy and people can lift your spirits and efforts to succeed.

## Aries

### ► March 21 to April 19

**LOVE:** His "fineness" doesn't mean you should jump the gun. **WORK:** If your creativity conflicts with your job, choosing may be difficult. **MONEY:** Although things are looking up, stay within the budget. **INSPIRATION:** Tending to small details can prepare you for the big picture.

## Taurus

### ► April 20 to May 20

**LOVE:** Don't allow your libido to block the feasibility of a union. **WORK:** Flying by the seat of your pants is possible when Mr. Moneybags is there to catch you. **MONEY:** Research a part-time gig with low overhead and high returns. **INSPIRATION:** The domino effect of paying it forward means more blessings for you.

## Gemini

### ► May 21 to June 20

**LOVE:** Your dual personality can enchant or disturb. Couples, clear the air. **WORK:** Your focus has higher-ups taking notice, but don't overthink your next move. **MONEY:** Be prepared to cut your losses and bail. **INSPIRATION:** The sideline lessons trump being ahead of the game.

## Cancer

### ► June 21 to July 22

**LOVE:** Open and honest communication starts the healing process. Couples, address the issues. **WORK:** When you confront the source, problems come to a head. **MONEY:** Compared with that of others, your over-the-top spending is in its infancy. **INSPIRATION:** Your value is not measured by those with the yardstick, but by those who value you. □

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Horoscope by **Thelma Balfour**, author of *Black Love Signs* and *Black Sun Signs* (Touchstone).

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